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THE ETHNIC FACTOR IN THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS-ETC(U)

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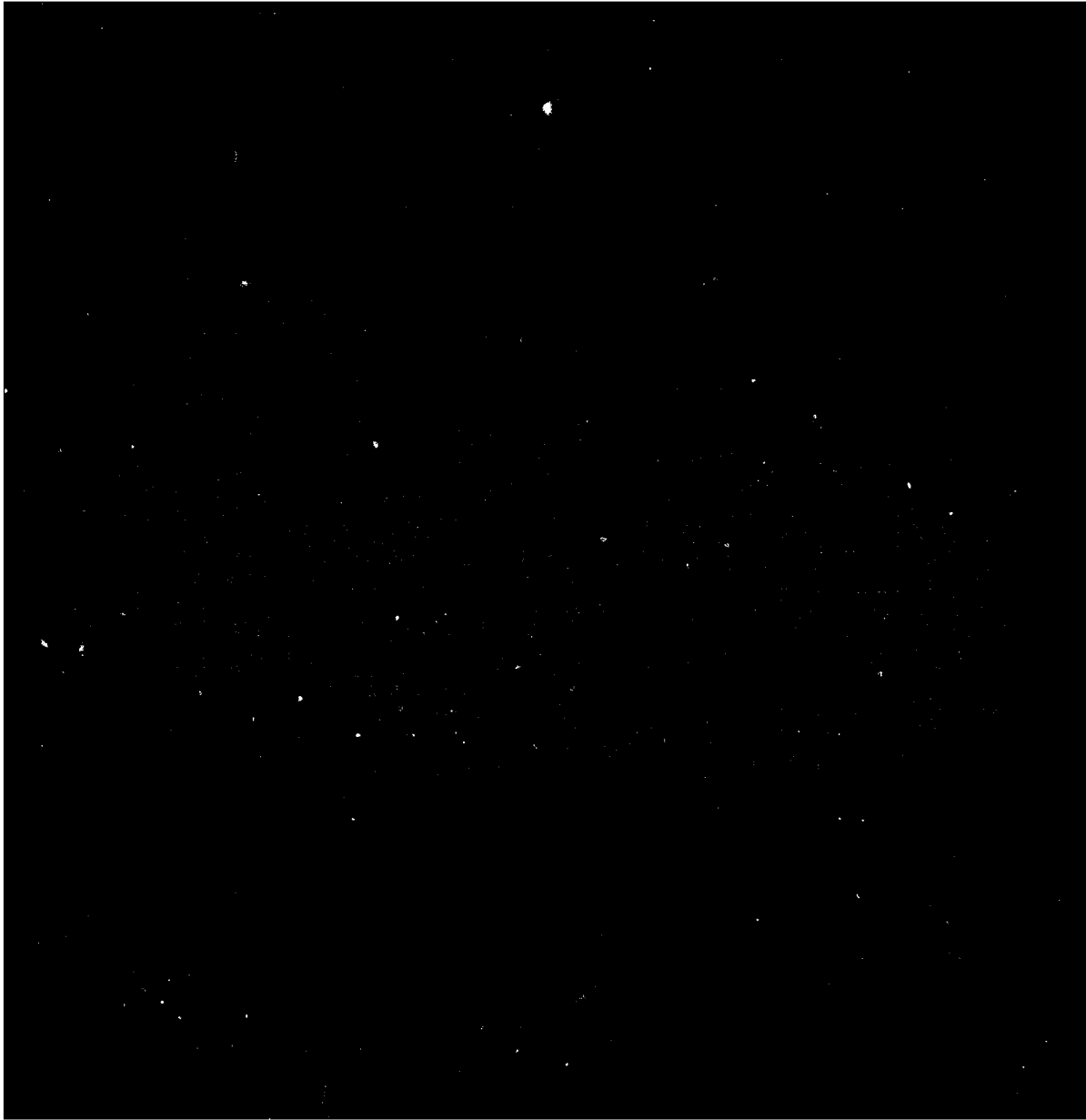
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A RAND NOTE

THE ETHNIC FACTOR IN THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

S. Enders Wimbush and Alex Alexiev

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PREFACE

The Soviet leadership is facing increasingly difficult demographic problems, which are beginning to translate into sharp imbalances in the labor inputs to the military manpower draftable cohort from the European and Asian regions of the USSR. The bulk of Soviet military manpower has traditionally been drawn from the European regions. A greater and greater share of the draft-age cohort will be coming from Soviet Central Asia, Kazakhstan, and the Caucasus, which are heavily populated by ethnic groups from Turkic and Iranic Muslim backgrounds.

This Note does not attempt to analyze the implications of this demographic shift for the Soviet military system, only to identify and assess the kinds and severity of ethnic-based problems found in the Soviet armed forces.

Information was drawn exclusively from in-depth interviews with former Soviet servicemen. It is probably the first study of its kind to address systematically the issue of nationality in the Soviet armed forces. This Note represents the highlights of the interviews. It is not a definitive analysis of nationality problems in the Soviet armed forces, but rather an attempt to show clear trend-lines. A planned expanded interviewee sample should strengthen, adjust, and enhance these findings.

This study should be of interest to specialists and intelligence users who analyze Soviet military behavior and capabilities, especially to those interested in Soviet military manpower policies and practices.

A parallel study by Dmitry Ponomareff and Susan Curran, "Managing the Ethnic Factor in Russian and Soviet Armed Forces: An Historic Overview" (unpublished Rand research) provides the historical context for this report.

SUMMARY

Ethnic balance in particular military branches and units is assured by the military recruitment system, which relies on participation of local draft boards (*voenkomats*) in the various ethnic regions of the USSR and a complex military "buyer" system, which functions to select recruits of a particular ethnic profile for particular kinds of military service.

Interviewees could identify nothing resembling national military units in today's Soviet armed forces. Rather, military units are ethnically mixed, and stationing is according to the principle of extraterritoriality--stationing soldiers away from their own ethnic regions of the USSR. For the most part, Slavic troops serving in non-Slavic areas are isolated from the native populations to prevent ethnic conflict.

Non-Slavic conscripts constitute approximately 20 percent of combat units, although usually they are relegated to serving in support capacities. Non-Slavs make up as much as 80 percent of the construction forces, and Central Asians are heavily overrepresented in these units. High technology services, such as the Strategic Rocket Forces and the Air Force, are manned largely by Slavs--approximately 90-95 percent, of whom the large majority are Russian.

Internal Security Forces (MVD) are reported to contain a significant percentage of Central Asians, who serve as prison camp guards and in general policing roles.

Non-commissioned officer ranks are filled primarily by Slavs, with Eastern Ukrainians constituting a sizable share, perhaps as high as 60 percent. Interviewees agree that Eastern Ukrainians resemble a permanent non-commissioned officer corps.

The Soviet officer corps is overwhelmingly Slavic--approximately 95 percent--of whom Russians are a strong majority. Current training and promotion policies discriminate against non-Slavs for attaining officer rank.

Pre-induction training for non-Slavs is limited; the *voenkomat* system is not observed to function as an important training instrument. Interviewees were able to identify no in-service Russian language courses for non-Russians.

Reportedly, Central Asians serving in construction battalions receive little or no military training of any kind. Non-Slavs who serve in support roles in combat units are reported to receive limited military training and access to weapons.

Russian is the language of command. All written and verbal instruction is in Russian, non-Russian literature is discouraged, and punishment is approved for those who cannot or will not learn Russian. Interviewees agree that the use of non-Russian languages cannot be controlled out of formation and that it is widespread. After approximately one year of service, non-Russian speaking conscripts acquire the ability to function at a basic level in Russian--"kitchen Russian"--but dissimulation is widespread and hard to control. Fluency in Russian is required in the high technology services, which limits the number of non-Slavs who can qualify for these duties.

Inter-ethnic relations in the armed forces are characterized by the isolation of Slavs and non-Slavs into their ethnic groups, intense racial discrimination against Central Asians and other dark-skinned non-Slavs, and observable ethnic self-assertiveness. Interviewees agree that, contrary to Soviet accounts, ethnic awareness is heightened, not reduced, in a close-quarter military environment. The conflict level between Slavs and, especially, Central Asians and other Turkic or Muslim servicemen is pronounced, often resulting in armed clashes of various intensity. Officers avoid intervening in inter-ethnic conflict.

These trends suggest interesting short- and long-term force effectiveness hypotheses and combat-related possibilities for the Soviet armed forces and especially for the Ground Forces. These hypotheses and possibilities include the reliability of the support force; basic training shortcomings, inadequate individual training, and unit training weaknesses; constrained introduction and mastering of modern technology; potential limitations on force size; internal security dilemmas; second battle weaknesses; and the potential for large-scale defections, ethnic or racial riots, and conflict between the armed forces and regional populations.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Regional differentials in the size of increments to the Soviet draft-eligible military manpower pool in the 1980s will cause ethnic factors to assume a new importance in the scheme of overall military manpower practices and policies. The basic demographic trends indicate a continuing decrease in the size of the draft-eligible cohort in the European regions of the USSR (RSFSR, the Ukraine, Belorussia, the Baltic States, and, to a lesser degree, Moldavia) and a rapidly growing cohort among the Asian peoples (Kazakhstan, the four Central Asian republics of Uzbekistan, Kirghizia, Tadshikistan, and Turkmenistan, Azerbaidzhan, many smaller North Caucasian peoples, Tatars, and Bashkirs), who are predominantly from Turkic or Iranian-Muslim backgrounds. According to Dr. Murray Feshbach of the Foreign Demographic Analysis Division of the U.S. Department of Commerce, in 1975 22.9 percent of the draft-eligible cohort came from Kazakhstan, Central Asia, and the Transcaucasus; by the end of the century, this proportion will rise to approximately 35 percent.

Although it is the spectre of such a dramatic demographic shift and the uncertainty of its implications for Soviet military manpower policy and effectiveness that stimulated the present study, a thorough investigation of the importance and implications of the ethnic factor in the Soviet military is long overdue. In part, this neglect stems from a general failure to examine in depth the multinational character of the Soviet state, which is subject to the pressures and strengths of other multinational states, and from a poor understanding of the ethnic variables affecting the Soviet manpower pool.

This study attempts to enhance our ability to understand the implications of the ethnic factor in the Soviet armed forces and to provide a basis for predicting the kinds and severity of problems, as well as the possible assets, that will derive from its rapid evolution. Soviet literature devoted to assessing the effect of ethnic pluralism on the military and vice versa is nonexistent. An occasional injudicious slip mentions such issues as ethnic stationing procedures, the

ethnic composition of different units, recruitment procedure for minority soldiers, in-service training opportunities, and language use and practices by soldiers of diverse linguistic backgrounds. Similarly, such sociological questions as inter-ethnic relations of servicemen, the interaction between soldiers and local populations of different ethnic, linguistic, or racial backgrounds, or ethnicity-based discipline problems are not discussed, other than to insist that the Soviet armed forces are a highly successful instrument of ethnic integration. The scant Soviet literature that does touch on the ethnic factor is characterized by an uninformative and polemical bias that seriously prejudices its explanatory value with respect to ethnic issues in Soviet military policies.

In our search for a remedy to the problem of resources, we conducted in-depth interviews with former Soviet servicemen of diverse ethnic backgrounds and the widest possible range of service-related functions. The following highlights of the first year's interviews are not intended to be used for comparison with other research strategies (for example, those that rely heavily on Soviet sources). In its present state, the interview data are too sparse to permit such a comparison; moreover, the information contained in this study is drawn exclusively from the interviews, not from supplementary sources. We do intend to proceed in this manner in the final project report.

The first year's sample consists of some 40 interviews, of which approximately 30 were fully processed for the purposes of this report. The sample has a built-in bias of its own: A majority of the respondents are Soviet Jews in emigration, although there are significant inputs from Russians, Ukrainians, Caucasians, and one Central Asian. For the most part, this bias has been overcome in those interviews that are yet to be analyzed from the first year and in the expanded sample we intend to use for the second year's work. We have taken steps to diversify the sample ethnically, and these improvements will be evident in the final report. For that effort, we hope to expand the respondent sample to no fewer than one hundred. Reports about specific aspects of military life for non-Russian servicemen differ very little from respondent to respondent, whether Russian, Jew, Caucasian, Ukrainian, Balt, or Central Asian.

A similar bias exists concerning the different branches of the military represented in our sample. The majority served in the Soviet Army, and we have no representatives (in the first 30 interviews) from the Soviet Air Force or the Border Forces. Our planned expanded sample already includes representatives of both.

Each interview is in-depth, lasting an average of 2-3 hours. We encouraged our respondents to provide us with facts and, for the most part, discouraged them from analysis. Among the specific issue areas covered in an interview are:

- o Recruitment, stationing, and personnel practices;
- o Pre-induction and in-service training and education;
- o Language use;
- o Control and discipline;
- o Inter-ethnic relations;
- o Weapons use and technological adaptation;
- o Force effectiveness.

In addition to these general areas, we have attempted to provide an ethnic profile of the different branches of the armed forces about which we have enough information to suggest trends and generalizations.

We wish to emphasize that the initial respondent sample is small because of a long planned project lead time and the unavailability of information about potentially useful respondents from existing intelligence data. Certain trends are reasonably clear; still we caution against generalization at this stage for, as other Rand projects that rely on emigre interviews have shown, an expanded sample often supplies important exceptions and meaningful nuance to what appear to be clear-cut cases. This is a highlights report, not a final analysis. Consistent with our goal simply to suggest the thrust of the responses at an early stage, we have chosen to quote extensively from them in order to preserve illuminating degrees of tone and conviction.

II. MANAGING THE ETHNIC FACTOR IN MILITARY RECRUITMENT

Recruiting practices in the Soviet armed forces are determined by two major factors: the principle of universal conscription and the desire to achieve an ethnic balance conducive to the establishment of key military-political objectives of the Soviet Army. The Soviet population is made up of more than one hundred nationalities with diverse racial, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds; and the core Russian nationality, around which the Army is built, represents only slightly more than 50 percent of the total Soviet population. By definition, therefore, recruitment is a complex task. The actual processes of induction to assure a desirable ethnic mix in the various services, branches, and individual units are carried out by an intricate induction system. Its methods for assuring an acceptable ethnic mix have been somewhat of a mystery to Western analysts. Our interviews shed light on these Soviet induction practices.

The most important induction and recruitment functions in the system are performed by a network of military commissariats (*voenkomats*), which are set up at every administrative level from the republic down to the city district. Although the *voenkomat* is not exclusively a recruiting and induction office (it is charged with a variety of other functions as well), it is by far the most important organ of the system. Nominally, the *voenkomat* is under the general jurisdiction of the Ministry of National Defense (MND) and the Main Political Administration (MPA), although the actual chain of command leads to the Soviet General Staff by way of the commander of the military district. The *voenkomats*, according to our respondents, are made up exclusively of officers on active duty, which contradicts earlier Western assumptions that they are staffed with reserve officers or civilians. Also, a majority of *voenkomat* officers--and in most cases the commanding officers--are said to be Russian, no matter where the geographic location of the particular office.*

*It is often difficult to distinguish among the three main Slavic nationalities (Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian) on the basis of name alone, and impossible on the basis of physical features. Thus, the respondents may fail to differentiate between Slav and Russian. Of course, the officers may actually be reservists called to active duty for this purpose and may serve a specific tour of duty.

The main task of the *voenkomat* is to assure the smooth functioning of the induction process by supplying the various services, branches, and units of the armed forces with recruits of the desirable physical, educational, political, and ethnic profile. For this purpose, every *voenkomat* maintains extensive dossiers on all induction-age youth in the area under its jurisdiction. Included in the dossier is all available information on the youths' ethnic, social, and political background; school record; health data; and character references. Armed with these data, and following instructions from Moscow on the number of recruits necessary, the *voenkomat* then is able to decide, on the basis of some general criteria, in which service or branch of service a given recruit will serve. For example, intelligent youths with good educational records and spotless political backgrounds are sent to the Air Force, or to the Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF); less intelligent but physically strong recruits are earmarked for the Navy, while people with questionable political backgrounds or those with criminal histories, insufficient education, and poor health as a rule end up in the construction battalions and other auxiliary units.

Official guidelines to be used by military authorities in determining the nationality composition of particular units are unclear, but almost all of our interviewees are convinced that there are specific instructions governing the conscription of non-Russians. A former high-ranking Soviet staff officer noted, for example, that as early as World War II there were specific sections within the *voenkomats* that were charged with dealing strictly with nationality-related issues in close cooperation with military counterintelligence and the KGB. According to him, during the war minorities were dealt with on the basis of a special secret decree, which he personally had read, and which he described as follows:

In late 1941, or at the beginning of 1942, there was a top-secret decree of the Council of Labor and Defense about service by non-Russians, which was formulated by a special directive of the Supreme Soviet. It was entitled "Concerning the Principle of Staffing in the Soviet Armed Forces," and the decree went something like this: "The war that has just begun has demonstrated that not all Soviet nations have similar fighting abilities.

Certain units have been defeated, due to the fact that the nations forming the majority in them have poor fighting abilities." The last item in the directive noted that Central Asians had proved "completely unreliable" as far as their fighting abilities were concerned and were not very useful in any military respect.

A different regulation, according to the same officer, stated that units should have a majority of the core Slavic nations in them and only small percentages of the "unstable nations." Reportedly, there were some exceptions to this directive, with occasional individual units having a majority of non-Slavs. Nonetheless, this differentiated approach to the ethnic factor in the Soviet military is consistent historically with Russian and Soviet practice.

Whether similar restrictions on non-Russian soldiers continue to be enforced in the Soviet Army today cannot be ascertained with any degree of certainty on the basis of the present sample. However, all of our respondents believe that restrictions of this kind remain in force, based on their own experiences and observations. The following comment is typical:

The government is always worried about the national composition in Army units and makes sure that certain nationalities occupy certain position in the military establishment. Special proportions are maintained in this respect, and they cannot afford to let things happen in a haphazard way.

Several respondents expressed their conviction that special numerical quotas on the acceptable share of minorities are established for the different services and branches. In one specific case, a former junior officer claimed to know of a regulation limiting to 5 percent the share of non-Russians in the Soviet Air Force.

The actual distribution of recruits and a desirable ethnic balance in particular units are achieved through the services of another peculiar Soviet institution--which interviewees referred to as the military buyer (*pokupatel*). The military buyer is simply an officer whose task is to receive recruits from the *voenkomat*. The buyer can originate either from

an individual unit or from a military district, with orders to pick up a certain number of recruits of a specific profile. If the buyer is from a military district and has orders to receive a large number of inductees, he may take them first to a central distribution point, from which they are claimed by buyers from individual units. A method often used, recalled several respondents, is to load a large number of inductees on a specially composed train traveling in a predetermined direction and have them claimed by buyers from military units along the way. In some cases the conscripts are first sent to training centers to undergo initial military training, and only afterward picked up by the buyers. A former Naval officer asserted that this was the standard procedure in the Navy. Of course, if the buyer comes from a specific unit, his charges are delivered directly to that unit. Characteristically, most recruits are not told where they will serve until they arrive at their final destination.

From top to bottom, the mechanism of the Soviet induction system may be summarized as follows: A central military authority, probably the General Staff, estimates the number of recruits needed by the individual services and branches. Then, on the basis of information provided by the *voenkomats*, this authority determines the number and the profile of conscripts available from each *voenkomat*. Finally, it directs buyers from given military districts or units to particular *voenkomats*, and in this manner matches demand and supply. Thus, by sending different buyers from the same formation to *voenkomats* in different parts of the Soviet Union, military authorities are able to control the nationality mix, as it is logical that the *voenkomats* in Uzbekistan, for example, for the most part contain a much higher proportion of non-Russians than, for example, the *voenkomats* in Smolensk.

This system of "buying" recruits from various regions of the USSR also explains why within individual units, in which the required ratio of core nationalities to minorities is achieved, very often one can find small micro-concentrations of particular ethnic groups, who have been "bought" from the same geographic region and probably from the same *voenkomat*. This would explain why, according to our respondents, in units with a large proportion of Slavs--say, 80 to 90 percent--the minorities might represent only one or two different non-Russian groups, rather than a more diversified mix. The buyer system also allows authorities

to draft people of different nationalities, not including the core group, for the same unit in consecutive years.

If the system malfunctions, which occasionally happens, an adequate ethnic balance can be achieved by transferring part of the unit's personnel to another location. For example, a former sergeant serving with the Strategic Rocket Forces near Leningrad recalled that during his second year of service his unit was sent a number of conscripts of German origin, apparently by mistake. After several days, when their ethnic background was discovered, they were transferred promptly. Mistakes of this kind can happen, according to our respondents, even though military identity cards, which state the nationality of the individual, are issued by the *voenkomat*.

Although the system does appear to function rather efficiently, it is not without problems. Apart from assorted bureaucratic and administrative failures, most of our respondents agree that both nepotism and corruption are widespread practices in the *voenkomat* chain. It is reported, for example, that even though Soviet soldiers as a rule serve far away from home, people with proper "connections" can arrange both to serve near their homes and to receive desirable jobs. A second category of people for whom the *voenkomats* often make exceptions are recruits with special nonmilitary skills that are much in demand in the military. These exceptions include renowned sportsmen, musicians, artists, actors, and so forth. For individual military units, winning various inter-Army sports championships and band or amateur theater competitions is a mark of great prestige, and commanders are said to be willing to go to considerable lengths to acquire talented youngsters.

A problem with more serious implications is the alleged prevalence of corrupt dealings and bribery in the *voenkomats*. None of our respondents expressed any doubt as to the continuation of the time-honored Russian tradition of payoffs (*blat*) for dealing with induction matters. Indeed, two of them had had a personal experience in bribing *voenkomat* officials. The following comments are typical of our sample:

- o Everybody there takes bribes. You can simply go to the head of the *voenkomat* and tell him, "Look, I'll give you 2,000 rubles if you do this," and he will do it.

- o You can bribe everywhere and everyone in the *voenkomat*. Of course, it depends on the particular person, and it is very expensive, but it is done all the time.

Bribing *voenkomat* officials usually is done to receive a temporary deferment from service, assignment to a unit close to home, or, in rarer cases, to avoid service altogether. The first two seemingly are commonplace. One of our respondents was able to get four consecutive deferments while finishing a technical school by having his father pay off the *voenkomat* chief. Another paid a bribe to secure a one-term deferment in the hope of being able to enter the university. Apparently, it is more difficult and costly to attempt to avoid service completely by bribing *voenkomat* officials because of the high risk this entails for the official involved. The most common method used is to bribe the *voenkomat* physician into pronouncing the youth medically unfit for military service. Whether this practice is widespread or not in actuality, there are indications that many Soviet soldiers believe it to be common and to have a distinct ethnic dimension. For example, many of the Slavic soldiers, particularly the less well educated, seem to believe that Jews, Georgians, and Armenians do not serve in representative numbers, because they are in a position to buy their way out.* Indeed, the Caucasian republics are identified by most of our respondents as the area of the USSR in which this kind of behavior is most prevalent.

* One of the authors observed this phenomenon personally while studying in Moscow. Among his acquaintances, the Georgians bragged openly about having bought their way out of military service.

III. GENERAL STATIONING GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES

The ethnic factor also decisively influences Soviet stationing practices as it does induction and manning procedures. The basic principle according to which stationing of military units is carried out in the Soviet Union is extraterritoriality. Extraterritoriality, in the simplest terms, means that Soviet soldiers as a rule are not allowed to serve in their native regions but instead are stationed in geographically distant and ethnically different areas of the country.

The extraterritorial stationing principle has not always been the rule in the Soviet Army. Before World War II, the Red Army, for the most part, was manned and deployed on a territorial basis. Only in the mid-1930s, and more specifically in the period 1935-1938, the territorial principle finally was abandoned and a massive transition to the cadre principle (*kadrovoy printsip*) occurred. Apparently, a partial reversal of this new policy took place during World War II, when the formation of some military units proceeded on the basis of territorial and nationality criteria.* Significantly, our respondents indicate that territorially manned and stationed units continued to exist after the war, perhaps as late as the early 1960s, although it is likely that there were only a few of these "national units." For example, several respondents provided fairly detailed, although at times contradictory, evidence that in the late 1940s and early 1950s something resembling national divisions were stationed in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaidzhan. Similarly, a Central Asian respondent claimed that there was an exclusively Kazakh division in Kazakhstan until 1962, and that a Turkmen division was disbanded before that. Respondents agreed that the abolition of national or quasi-national military units should be taken as a valuable clue to official Soviet attitudes. All respondents believed that the national divisions ultimately were disbanded because of ethnic unrest and suspected political disloyalty. Several of them noted that specific instances of anti-Soviet unrest in the 1950s--such as those in Tbilisi and in Kaunas, for example, that had to be

* For details, see Dmitry Ponomareff and Susan Curran, "Managing the Ethnic Factor in Russian and Soviet Armed Forces: An Historic Overview" (unpublished Rand research).

suppressed by military force--convinced the authorities that national units presented a very real danger to Soviet control in peripheral areas.

From the very beginning of the Soviet State, the Kremlin leadership has viewed the Red Army not only as the traditional defender of national security from foreign threats but also as an instrument of state control and the ultimate guarantor of the continued political hegemony of the Communist Party. For this reason, the key principle of extraterritorial stationing can be said to derive in no small measure from the regime's requirement of maintaining a reliable armed force for internal policing and control duties. Thus, the possibility that the Army may have to be used to put down antiregime outbursts by ethnically diverse sectors of the Soviet population--as indeed it has been on more than one occasion--is an important factor influencing Party military stationing policies. As our respondents noted:

- o The government is trying all the time to make sure that military personnel will have no ties to the local population. Soldiers should not serve in a unit deployed in their native region, because, if the soldiers did have ties, relatives, or acquaintances in that area, it would be more difficult to send them to shoot at the people if the need arose.
- o A great deal of translocation is going on all the time. For example, Russians would be sent to serve in Kazakhstan, while Kazakhs will go to the Ukraine. Ukrainians can serve in Georgia, Georgians somewhere in the Baltic area, and Baltic people might end up in Russia. This is done solely because the Army bears to a great extent police functions. A Russian soldier probably would not shoot at Russian women, but a Kazakh would. He would say, "They are Russians. Let's get them."
- o Soldiers do not serve in the same area where they are born. This is done in order to prevent discontent and national feelings. There are official instructions specifying that people must serve in places far from their homes to avoid trouble and national solidarity.

A number of our respondents believed that there is a conscientious policy to choose specific nationalities who are known to be traditionally antagonistic to the ethnic population in the area in which they serve. This antagonism is strengthened--or perhaps it would be more accurate to

say that it is not mitigated--by an associated stationing practice, especially in the non-Russian areas, that isolates servicemen from the local populations. This is achieved by what appears to be a *de facto* quarantine in many units. For example, one respondent, who served his entire two-year term within 30 kilometers of Tashkent, recalls that he was unable to visit the town until the day of his demobilization, and that similar restrictions applied to his fellow soldiers as well. This attempt to prevent contacts between the Army and the area's local residents may in part determine the fairly widespread Soviet policy of locating military installations away from major population centers. Officers, apparently, are not affected by these travel and furlough restrictions. In all cases reported officers enjoyed the freedom to travel regardless of the area in which they were stationed. Ordinary soldiers, including those of non-Russian origin, who served in predominantly Russian areas, recall that military authorities there were much more liberal with furloughs and that the soldiers generally were allowed to visit nearby towns on a regular basis.

The extraterritorial principle of stationing is particularly relevant in some sensitive branches of the armed forces such as the border troops. For example, according to our respondents, the Border Forces are staffed almost exclusively with Slavic nationalities; although, even here, precautions are taken to ensure that they perform their duties correctly.

- o Border troops are mostly Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians, because native troops will not fire on their own countrymen. However, Ukrainians and Belorussians do not serve on the borders of their own republic.
- o Border units in the Far East consist basically of Ukrainians and Belorussians, whereas Russians serve on the western border. Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, and other minorities are not trusted at all. They do not serve in the Border Forces.
- o Most of the border troops are Russian, because they are trusted more than others. Definitely, no one from a republic with ethnic kin directly across a border would be allowed to serve in the Border Forces of that republic.

Soviet forces stationed abroad also appear to be staffed primarily with Slavic, mostly Russian, soldiers. Interestingly, several of our respondents believed that a special category of Russians is preferred for service in Eastern Europe. In their view, conscripts for service there are most likely to be chosen from the rural areas of central Russia. They explain why as follows:

- o There are many Russian peasants from Kalinin, Yaroslav, and Tula regions who are sent to serve in Eastern Europe. They are sent there because they are sufficiently civilized to know what a toilet is and how to behave themselves more or less in a civilized manner. At the same time, these peasants are less educated, less informed, easier to indoctrinate, and less likely to ask questions.
- o Strictest selection of troops takes place for service in Eastern Europe. Mostly what you see there are Russians from the villages, although there are some Ukrainians and Belorussians and a few of the minorities. The Russian peasants are very much attached to their villages and families, and would rarely think of running away. Also, they are not Western oriented. Indeed, they are afraid of the West because it is something they don't know. For them, Russia and their relatives back in the Motherland are everything.

These reports contradict the recent speculations by Western analysts that the Soviet contingents in the Warsaw Pact forces may include sizable non-Russian and especially Asian contingents.

Our respondents were emphatic about the reluctance of Soviet leaders to use non-Slavic servicemen, and especially those with co-ethnics or co-religionists abroad, beyond Soviet borders. In this respect it is interesting that when questioned before the fact about the possibilities of using Soviet Central Asian troops in a hypothetical invasion of Afghanistan, several of our respondents made the following argument:

The authorities are not likely to use Tadzhiks or Uzbeks if they send military forces into Afghanistan. Nothing like this will happen. They are afraid of disloyalty, and there is no doubt that they would prefer Slavic soldiers. It will be the same if some conflict occurs in Iran. They will never send Azerbaidzhanis over there, only Slavic troops.

These assessments would seem to contradict the persistent if unconfirmed reports by Western journalists, implying large-scale use of Soviet Central Asian troops in the Afghanistan incursion. Although we remain skeptical of these reports, the subject requires further elaboration.*

*We intend to produce a supplementary report dealing specifically with this subject.

IV. ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF CONSCRIPTS, NON-COMMISSIONED
OFFICERS, AND THE OFFICERS CORPS

Soviet adherence to the principle of universal conscription implies that the ethnic composition of those drafted into the armed forces by and large should proportionally reflect the ethnic makeup of the Soviet population. In fact, this appears to be the case with respect to the total cohort of conscripts serving their obligatory two- and three-year military term, although as we shall see, there are major and evidently planned differentials in the ethnic mix in different services and branches. However, the ethnic composition of the noncommissioned officers and the officers corps is far from ethnically proportional. An examination of these disparities and of their apparent rationale in Soviet policy is essential for a clear understanding of the influence of the ethnic factor in the Soviet military.

CONSCRIPTS

The most dramatic difference in ethnic ratios among draftees can be observed between combat and noncombat units, according to our respondents. All evidence from our sample to date showed conclusively that Soviet combat units are staffed by a clear majority of representatives of the Slavic nationalities. None of our respondents who had served in the past ten to fifteen years could recall a single combat unit above battalion size, regardless of branch, in which the percentage of Slavic soldiers was less than 80 percent of the total; and in most cases they observed that the percentage of Slavic conscripts was even greater. Conversely, the ratio of non-Slavs in some noncombat formations, such as the construction troops, reportedly often reaches 90 percent or more. The following comment by a former officer is typical of our sample:

There are definite nationality-based criteria for service in the Army. Non-Slavic nationalities are in the overwhelming minority in combat units. Noncombat units, such as the construction battalions, do not have very many Russians, Ukrainians, or Belorussians. The soldiers there are people from Central Asia and the Caucasus. In regular units there are few of these latter soldiers, only those that are educated and trusted.

Whether these findings can be substantiated and strengthened will depend on a wider interviewee sample, but the current sample reflects a clear trend: that non-Slavic nationalities, for whatever reason, are not allowed to serve in Soviet combat units in numbers proportionate to their share in the general population.

Our present sample does permit some general observations about the considerable differentials in minority representation within various services and branches of the combat forces. Unquestionably, the units with the most limited non-Slavic representation are in the modern, high-technology services, such as the Strategic Rocket Forces, the Air Force, and the Navy. According to the limited information available to us regarding the Air Force and the Navy, both of these services are almost 100 percent Slavic, with a very large Russian majority. To the extent non-Slavs are present at all, they are restricted to a variety of support duties.

Minorities appear to serve in somewhat larger numbers in the Strategic Rocket Forces. The former SRF servicemen in our sample reported that non-Slavs represented up to 10 percent of their units. Some of them are reported to be well-educated people from the Baltic Republics, who are valued for their technological aptitude and training; that is to say, they serve alongside Slavic soldiers even though they are Balts. Respondents from SRF troops also report a scattering of Central Asians and Caucasians in their units. One respondent, whose SRF unit was located in Kazakhstan, recalled that there was not a single Kazakh in the unit and only a handful of Uzbeks. Moreover, even when they are drafted into SRF units, these minorities seldom are entrusted with militarily relevant duties and often are relegated to menial chores. Another respondent described the role of minorities in his SRF unit in northern Russia:

In my unit there were no more than 10 percent minorities. There were quite a few Kazakhs, about ten Turkmen, and several Uzbeks. These people were incorporated into the unit as support personnel and worked much like construction battalions. As a rule these minorities did not deal with any sophisticated equipment, but were engaged primarily in building and repairing shelters, constructing and so forth.

Among the factors said to contribute to such a policy toward the minorities are insufficient education, language incompetence, and perceived disloyalty. The last factor is considered particularly important, and ethnic groups that are deemed to harbor anti-Soviet attitudes, such as Jews and Soviet Germans, seldom are drafted into the SRF. Even among Slavs, Komsomol membership and a clean political record are considered obligatory for service in the Rocket Forces. Other branches have similar requirements for minorities, although it is not known if they are enforced to the extent that one finds them in the SRF. For example, a former paratrooper, who served in a battalion-sized unit that included a substantial number of recruits from the Adygei minority, noted that although the Adygei were considered to be regular soldiers, they were never given the requisite paratrooper training and worked almost exclusively in the kitchen and in other support roles.

The percentage of non-Slavic nationalities is likely to be higher in the more traditional branches of the Army, such as armor, artillery, and infantry. Those of our respondents who served in units of this kind indicate that non-Slavs often make up to 20 percent of regimental-size units, occasionally more than 20 percent in smaller units. For example, the ethnic composition of one mechanized infantry regiment, which was stationed in the Far East in 1969 and is said to be typical, was composed 80 percent of Slavs, 10 percent of Central Asians, 5 percent of Balts, and 5 percent of Caucasians (Georgians, Armenians, and Azerbaidzhanis). One curious exception, for which none of our respondents had an explanation, involved a company in this regiment that was staffed almost exclusively by Central Asians but, as usual, with Russian officers. More or less the same general 80/20 percent mix is reported to be the case in artillery units deployed within Soviet borders. Again, as in the case of the more prestigious services, many of the minority soldiers clearly serve in various support capacities.

Two clear trend lines emerge from our interviews. First, non-Slavic nationalities are strongly underrepresented in combat units of the Soviet armed forces. Second, even those minorities who are drafted into combat units usually serve in noncombat capacities within them, often receiving no systematic military instruction beyond basic training.

Minority conscripts who are not drafted into regular Army units are sent to serve in a variety of other units, which we have grouped together, somewhat arbitrarily, under the heading "Noncombat." The two major elements of this category, and the ones about which we possess most information, are the construction battalions (*stroibat*) and the internal security troops (MVD). Even though some of the units included under the noncombat label receive considerable military training--for example, the internal security units--their primary mission is not a strictly military one. At the same time, noncombat formations constitute a large proportion of the Soviet armed forces and play an important role in the Soviet military system, a role which is little understood by Western analysts.

The construction battalions (*stroibats*), the largest single component of the noncombat troops, are engaged exclusively in various types of construction work, as their name would indicate. Although they are used primarily on construction projects of military relevance, *stroibats* have been known to build civilian projects in the past, and they continue to do so at present. It is impossible to estimate the number of personnel serving in these battalions, but all evidence indicates that they represent a sizable share of the armed forces as a whole. Our respondents estimate this number from a low of 7 percent to a high of 20 percent, with most of the estimates falling in the 10 to 15 percent range. *Stroibats* are located throughout the country and often are to be found side by side with regular units. Unlike regular units, however, they are seldom stationed in permanent quarters and move on as soon as a given project is finished.

The construction battalions are under the general jurisdiction of the Ministry of National Defense (MND) and possibly a special directorate of it. We have some information indicating that the various services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Strategic Rocket Forces) may have their own *stroibats*, but the available evidence does not allow us to elaborate on the nature of these battalions at this time. It is clear, however, that the construction troops have an identical internal structure with regular Army units, and that they draw recruits on a semiannual basis from the same general conscript pool.

The similarity with combat units ends here, however. For construction units are perhaps the only part of the Soviet armed forces where non-Slavic nationalities, particularly Soviet-Asian nationalities, outnumber the Slavs by substantial margins. *Stroibats* also are the least prestigious units by far. Indeed, many Slavs consider them to be a form of punishment. Data provided by respondents who served in construction battalions, including two who served as officers, are remarkably uniform, and they give the following picture of the ethnic breakdown: Slavs, as a rule, represent no more than 20 percent, usually much less, while Central Asians amount to 50 percent or more. The balance is composed of Caucasians, Baltic people, and Jews. The latter are said to be particularly overrepresented in *stroibats*. Also overrepresented in these battalions are Western Ukrainians, who have a long tradition both of anti-Sovietism and russophobia.

Assignment to a *stroibat* is decided on the basis of several factors. With some important exceptions, these are valid for both Slavs and non-Slavs. The most important criteria for assignment are insufficient education, poor health, a criminal history, language incompetence, and suspected disloyalty. Few Russians, or even people from the European part of the Soviet Union, end up in the *stroibats* because of lack of education or poor health. According to our respondents, the common denominator for a majority of *stroibat* conscripts, Slav and non-Slav alike, is perceived disloyalty to the regime. The important difference is that Russians are suspected individually, whereas Central Asians, Jews, Germans, Estonians, and other minorities, are suspected collectively.

- o In the USSR there are no restrictions on military service based on nationality. According to the principle of universal and obligatory service, everyone must be drafted, but there is one major catch. A majority of the nationalities that are considered either culturally underdeveloped or untrustworthy, such as the Central Asians, Azerbaidzhanis, Moldavians, Jews, and all the *Churkas** are sent to the construction battalions.
- o If a draftee is considered a bit unloyal, if he had said something against the regime someplace, or even if his father or grandfather were politically suspect, then he is sent to the *stroibat*. So there are basically two

* See Glossary.

categories of people who are drafted to serve there: individuals who have something negative in their dossiers, and people from the minorities who are not trusted on principle.

- o Construction battalions consist primarily of minorities, uneducated people, and those that are against the regime. They are all considered unfit for regular service.

As these observations and others indicate, all *stroibat* recruits, regardless of nationality, are considered second-class soldiers by military authorities. Despite this, there are indications that a strict hierarchy, based on nationality, exists, even within the construction units. Here again, as is the case in regular units, Central Asians appear to be at the very bottom. A former commander of a *stroibat* company described what he considered to be the typical division of labor in his unit:

The non-Russians usually were kept on jobs which did not require special qualification. If we were working on a building, for example, the division of labor would be something like this: the Russians usually handled the most sophisticated equipment; Ukrainians and other Europeans would be laying cable inside the building; while the *Churkas* would be outside digging ditches or whatever other hard work needed to be done.

Paradoxically, for all the hardships and indignities suffered by minorities in the construction battalions, our respondents report that service in these units has some advantages. First, all our respondents agreed that military discipline is more lax in the *stroibat* than anywhere else in the Army. This undoubtedly is the case because servicemen in these units do not deal with strictly military affairs or equipment and have little or no military training of any kind (for details, see section on Military Training and Education). Second, because construction battalions are for the most part overwhelmingly constituted of minorities, the minority recruit stands a fairly good chance of serving together in one of them with a large number of his co-ethnics, and thereby experiencing

a certain cultural ambience, which could not be found in units of another type. Finally, *stroibat* soldiers who work on civilian projects apparently are paid salaries that are incomparably higher than the token allowances given to regular conscripts, although not as high as civilian wages.* This may be an additional incentive.

Staffing policies for the internal security troops (MVD) also are interesting for what they indicate about the ethnic mix of different units and of the official perceptions of how the ethnic factor is to be managed in the armed forces and in Soviet society. These troops are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Ministerstvo Vnutrennykh Del*), and as a result are often referred to as MVD troops. They should not be confused with the Militia, which is a more traditional law-and-order organ, also under MVD jurisdiction. The primary function of the MVD troops appears to be assuring internal security and political order in the USSR, which, in extreme cases, may call for suppressing riots, civil disturbances, and other breakdowns of some order of magnitude. According to a number of our respondents, units of the MVD troops are stationed in every Soviet town above a certain size, although the specific criteria are not known. Most MVD units are described as mechanized infantry; in larger cities the MVD has armored units under its jurisdiction as well. One of their main responsibilities, apart from the general ones described above, is to guard the extensive network of Soviet penal institutions, including prisons and labor camps. As is the case for construction troops, internal security detachments are manned exclusively with regular draftees.

Given the not insignificant political function of these units, it is surprising perhaps to find that non-Slavic minorities are drafted into them in substantial numbers. Those of our respondents who had had experience and contact with MVD units (although none had served in them) were convinced that this unusual situation was the result of a well-thought-out policy of exploiting interethnic animosities for the regime's purposes. The following comment is typical:

*When *stroibat* conscripts are paid for working on civilian projects, a certain percentage is withheld from their wages to pay for food, lodging, and uniforms.

There are many minorities in the MVD troops, especially from Central Asia. They serve most often as guards in prisons and in the Gulag. This is done conscientiously in order to improve control. Their Russian is not good, but they do an excellent job in their guard duties and are considered the most reliable guards for prisons and camps. They are also very tough and cruel, having no sympathy for the prisoners and displaying great hostility toward the Russian inmates. There have been cases where minority would kill prisoners without any reason. This whole system is not accidental, however, but the result of a very clever and refined policy. There are special experts in the Soviet Army who study national characteristics and assign people accordingly.

It is significant that although nearly all respondents felt that minorities, and Central Asians in particular, are preferred for guard duty, interviewees of Russian origin were particularly strident on this issue, often discussing Central Asians who serve in this capacity in highly pejorative, even racist terms:

- o Generally speaking, it is mostly Central Asians who serve in the Internal Security Troops. They are put there because these are people who are ruthless and do not know what humanism is. If they are told to shoot and kill Russian prisoners, they would do it with great pleasure. That's why there are a lot more of the *Churkas* in these units than Russians.
- o People from Central Asia are regularly drafted into MVD units because they are known for their obedience, stupidity, and cruelty. They do everything they are asked to without thinking, and are especially mean toward Russians.

It is impossible to estimate the ethnic mix in MVD troops on the basis of our present sample, although forthcoming interviews promise to address this issue. This qualification notwithstanding, it is reasonably certain that guard units assigned to penal institutions include substantial numbers and maybe a majority of Central Asians. A former noncommissioned officer who in his civilian occupation had a chance to visit numerous prisons claimed that all guards below the rank of sergeant he saw there were Kazakh. Another respondent who, himself, spent several years in labor camps also confirmed that most of the

guards there were Asian, although he was uncertain of their specific nationality. Information on the composition of MVD troops stationed in cities is even more fragmentary. An interviewee who was a long-time resident of Kiev said that half of the MVD units there were staffed by Asians and people from the Caucasus, with the other half presumably being Russian.* An Estonian respondent claimed that most MVD soldiers in his republic are Russian. It is clear the considerable amounts of additional data will be required before any broad generalizations on MVD ethnic manning policies can be drawn.

Our interviews provide still another intriguing area of non-Russian minority service, which requires elucidation. Several respondents who served in the combat troops were familiar with predominantly non-Slavic units performing guard duties at various locations. For example, an airfield near Alma Ata in which one of them served was reportedly secured by a guard company in which Udmurt and Chechen conscripts formed an 80 percent majority. In another regimental-sized garrison in the Far East near the Chinese border, the entire military police detachment was said to consist of Kazakhs, with the exception of the commander. It is unknown if either of these units was from the MCD troops, or whether they are special guard units within the regular Army structure. If this riddle can be solved, we suspect that the question of the origin of the Central Asian troops reportedly serving in Afghanistan at the current time will be much closer to resolution.

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

A clear ethnic portrait of sergeants and non-commissioned officers emerges from the interviews.** Sergeants are of two sorts: those who are serving one obligatory term in the military and who have been promoted

* One of the present authors on several occasions observed sizable mounted detachments of Central Asian MVD troops in Moscow.

** The Soviet Army has the following ranks between private and junior lieutenant: corporal (EFREITOR), junior sergeant (MLADSHI SERZHANT), sergeant (SERZHANT), senior sergeant (STARSHI SERZHANT), master sergeant (STARSHINA), and warrant officer (PRAPORSHCHIK). There are no exact equivalents for these ranks in the U.S. armed forces.

to sergeant rank or perhaps attended a sergeants school, and professional sergeants who remain in the military on extended service duty. In the first category, the majority clearly are Slavs, but non-Slavic servicemen can be and often are promoted to junior sergeant rank depending upon the immediate requirements of their particular unit. Without attending a sergeants school, apparently one can be promoted only as far as sergeant (*serzhant*). These sergeants wield very little power and often possess less real authority over other conscripts than second-year recruits, according to our respondents.

In the second category, there are very few non-Slavs among the extended term and career non-commissioned officers and almost no Central Asians. These findings were not unexpected, as they appear to conform to general manning trends in the Soviet military. Our examination of the ethnic mix of non-commissioned officers did result in a rather surprising finding concerning the Slavic majority. According to all of our respondents, Ukrainians constitute a majority, perhaps a clear majority, among the Soviet sergeants. In this they appear to be grossly overrepresented, not only in proportion to their share of the total Soviet population but also with respect to the Ukrainian share of the Slavic population. Our interviewees advanced several explanations for this phenomenon. First, a considerable number of respondents attributed Ukrainian predominance among the non-coms to an alleged national affinity for the military service and careerism. Again, the attitudes of the respondents, of whom only one was a Ukrainian, revealed some deep-rooted, if surprising to us, national prejudices. These are some examples:

The Ukrainians make excellent sergeants and junior commanders from the authorities' point of view and are much preferred for this type of service. It is a part of the Ukrainian character to like military service. This is historically conditioned and predates the revolution. They have a warrior tradition and once they enter the service and get those cherished high boots and the leather belt, they are psychologically affected.

The Ukrainians, more than anybody else, strove for promotion. For most of the people in the army the greatest prize is to be able to get a leave. Not so for the Ukrainians. They would do everything to get promoted first because power over other soldiers seems to be very important for them.

All the non-commissioned positions in my unit were occupied by Ukrainians. The sergeants are all Ukrainians probably because they have a tendency to command more than the Russians; the Russians are more inert. The Ukrainians are all careerists and upstarts.

About 75 percent of the non-commissioned officers in the army are of Ukrainian origin. They all reenlist when their normal term expires. They were despicable people much hated and feared by the soldiers.

There are ethnic categories of sergeants. Most of them are Ukrainians, which seems to be sort of a rule in the army. Maybe this is due to their ethnic characteristics. As a rule they are known as cruel and completely unscrupulous.

Soldiers from the Ukraine become sergeants immediately. They like to command and would do anything to get promoted so that they can order people around. They are also very rude, cruel and malicious. A Ukrainian sergeant may have only twenty people under his command, but he will still sneer at them continuously, make them march around or send them to clean latrines for half the night just for the sheer pleasure of humiliating somebody. This is a very characteristic trait of the Ukrainians and everybody in the Soviet army knows about it.

Second, apart from such an alleged national predisposition toward military service, many respondents recognized other more tangible reasons and incentives for Ukrainians to strive for the non-commissioned ranks. It was generally agreed that reenlistment in the armed forces is practically the only way for a young person to escape the particularly

dreary life in the Ukrainian village.* As one respondent has put it succinctly:

If you were born in the village, you will live there all of your life. There are only two ways to get out of the village in the Soviet Union: through the university or through the army. For the peasant, only the second alternative is viable.

The reason reenlistment in the army is a rather attractive option for some is based on the practice of issuing internal passports to extended service personnel who have served a three- or five-year term.

This incentive was emphasized by the sole Ukrainian in our sample:

As a rule, simple people from the kolkhozes, villages, and remote places reenlist. They do that because if one is drafted from a kolkhoz he must return there at the end of his service term. He has no passport and cannot go to the city. However, after you reenlist for three years and fulfill your contract, you are given a passport and are free to go anywhere. That is why people reenlist. Ordinarily, these people are Ukrainians.

Not only are former non-commissioned officers granted the right to settle in a city after demobilization, but their chances of receiving a well-paid job in the city apparently are excellent. According to our respondents, upon discharge all former non-coms are given the option of joining either the militia or the KGB in the city of their choice. In both cases, they keep their military ranks or are immediately promoted one grade. There are also significant material incentives and rewards for reenlisting as a sergeant or a warrant officer. To begin with, salaries in the army are

* This point needs some clarification. Most village dwellers in the Soviet Union, at least until very recently, were not issued internal passports and, although they can travel without them, this effectively prevents them from resettling in a town. This system, for all practical purposes, ties them to the kolkhoz in a manner not altogether different from the way in which indentured serfs in czarist Russia were tied to the feudal estate.

much higher than those in the collective farm; and for most of the prospective non-coms, who are said to have generally low educational levels, comparable salaries are unattainable in any other field of endeavor. The army also provides free housing, meals, clothing, and generous vacations. We have some sketchy evidence that there may be some additional if unofficial inducements. One respondent recalled being told by his master sergeant, who intended to return to his village after the expiration of his term, that he had been offered a house and a small piece of land for a five-year reenlistment.

All of these incentives, of course, are open to non-Ukrainians as well, but apart from them and rural Russians, few other nationalities seem to show much enthusiasm for reenlistment. Basically, our informants believed that non-Slavs do not wish to reenlist for the simple reason that they find the army environment culturally, linguistically, and socially alien, if not hostile. The material incentives mentioned above may not be as important to them, because the standard of living is considerably higher in the non-Slavic than in the Slavic rural areas.

OFFICERS

To a much greater extent than in the non-commissioned ranks, the Soviet officer corps is ethnically Slavic with an overwhelming Russian majority. Most of our respondents had not seen a single minority officer of Central Asian or Caucasian origin and only an occasional Baltic or Jewish officer. A comparison of the information provided by those of our respondents who had served in the 1940s and 1950s with former military men who did their terms of duty in the 1970s suggests that over the years the Soviet officer corps has become more homogeneously Slavic and Russian instead of becoming more integrated. Several of our respondents suggested that since World War II not only has there been no conscious effort to recruit ethnic minorities into the officer ranks but, if anything, the military authorities have attempted to "purify" the officer corps as much as possible. We were told of two specific instances of such ethnic "purification" policies (note that we have not been able to substantiate them from other sources thus far). The first case involved

an alleged purge of Jewish officers said to have taken place in the early 1950s. In the second instance, a former colonel said that Khrushchev's troop reductions in the late 1950s resulted in the demobilization of a much larger proportion of non-Slavic than Slavic officers.

It was generally agreed that the Russian share of the corps is in excess of 80 percent of the total, with perhaps 10 to 15 percent Ukrainians and Belorussians and a scattering of others. Several aspects of Soviet recruitment and management policies with regard to the officer corps, taken together, assure a strong Russian overrepresentation. First, it appears that the Soviet military education system, which produces most of the officer cadres, has some features that strongly prejudice the chances of a non-Russian against being accepted. To mention just one, all candidates for admission to Soviet officer schools must take an entrance examination in Russian language and literature, which immediately puts non-Russians at a distinct disadvantage. Although none of our interviewees knew of official policies to discourage minority pursuit of the officer career, few doubted that there are unofficial directives to this end. A former professor at the signal corps academy in Leningrad told us that after 23 years of teaching there he could recall only a handful of non-Slavic cadets, although the academy trained considerable numbers of foreign students. In his view, prestigious military schools such as NAKHIMOV and SUVOROV are simply not open to the minorities. He further pointed out that most military academies are located in Russia proper, a fact that may serve to discourage potential candidates from the ethnic areas from ever trying to get in. In his opinion, Soviet failure to build officer schools in non-Slavic areas is not accidental.

Second, another interesting practice contributing to Russian predominance in the officer corps involves what amounts to involuntary recruitment of cadres. It is not unusual, according to our respondents, for the military authorities to approach university graduates from institutions with a military chair and offer them an opportunity to join the army for period of from two to five years. We are told that, in practice, it is impossible for an individual to refuse such an offer, because not only would a refusal be interpreted as a hostile act, but it may also result in the loss of the individual's university diploma.

This seems to be a widespread practice and is said to involve mostly Russians below the age of 30 who are specialists in military-relevant fields, including physicians.

There are also cases where individuals would sign a contract for a limited term, which, upon expiration, is prolonged unilaterally by the authorities without the officer's consent. Two such cases were described to us:

In my unit there was a senior lieutenant who had graduated from the Institute of Communications in Moscow. After that he was drafted for two years, but when his term was up there was an order from the Minister of Defense and he was left to serve in the army indefinitely. This was not voluntary--it was an order. When one enters the army and takes an oath, one is no longer a free man. This officer hated the military and was despondent, but there was nothing he could do.

One of the officers in the special construction and assembly unit had been signed on for three years as a specialist, but later they kept him on. He was very angry and kept getting drunk and causing all kinds of problems, but they still didn't let him go. They just didn't promote him so he was only a lieutenant, though he was thirty years old.

Involuntary recruitment is made more palatable by the high salaries offered by the military. A former engineering graduate whose friend was drafted in this way recalled that his salary in the military was two and a half times higher than his civilian wages.

Third, non-Slavs are said to be discouraged from pursuing a military career by certain discriminatory practices toward them once they are in the service. The most common practice reported by our sample is a much slower rate of promotion for minorities than for Slavs. None of the respondents who had served recently recalled seeing any minority officers with a rank higher than major. Several had served with officers who, although close to retirement, had not progressed beyond major, whereas much younger Russians had attained superior grades. For example, an air defense brigade in which one of our interviewees served had a Jewish deputy chief of staff who, despite having graduated from a

prestigious staff academy, had remained a major while his considerably younger and less-educated Russian superior was a colonel. The same may be true with respect to the officers of the reserve. For instance, one Russian respondent who was given a junior lieutenant rank after graduating from the university was promoted to captain of the reserves in eight years. His best friend, who was Jewish and also an engineer, remained a junior lieutenant and was seldom if ever called to reserve duty.

Respondents suggest that within the officer corps there appears to be a slight ethnically determined functional differentiation. Ukrainian officers are reported to serve mostly as political officers and regular line officers, and people of Baltic origin are almost exclusively in technical positions. Among the few remaining Jewish officers, most are also specialists; surprisingly they are to be found among the ZAMPOLITs, or political officers.

V. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Soviet education and training policies with respect to the non-Russian minorities not only influence military effectiveness but also have far-reaching implications for the nature of inter-ethnic relations in the Soviet Union. An examination of Soviet practice in this area is especially pertinent to our study also because the notion of the Soviet army being a decisive instrument of ethnic integration and socialization and a highly successful "school for communism" has long been a sacrosanct tenet of party propagandists, and one that is often accepted rather uncritically by Western analysts.

A considerable amount of information is available from Soviet sources on the extent and nature of pre-induction training of Soviet youth. Most of it describes an extensive, well-organized and multi-faceted system of pre-service military education said to reach an overwhelming majority of Soviet draft age youngsters. The experience of our respondents in this respect reveals a much more ambiguous and differentiated picture. Many of them were of the opinion that pre-military training basically is concentrated in large urban areas and is much less consequential elsewhere.

Several of the respondents who had lived in non-Russian areas contrasted the activities of organizations charged with pre-induction training (such as DOSAAF^{*}) in their home regions with those in Slavic or Russian areas and found them more limited in the former. For example, a former paratrooper recalled that almost half of his fellow-conscripts who were both Russian and from large cities had received sky diving training by DOSAAF instructors but none of the non-Russians had.

We were supplied with considerable evidence that many of the pre-induction military preparation and education tasks with which the *voenkomats* are charged are seldom carried out in practice. Of particular relevance is the finding that none of the interviewees had any knowledge, direct or indirect, of systematic pre-induction Russian language instruction for draftees with poor Russian comprehension. This, of course, according to

* Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Air Force, and Navy.

official Soviet sources is one of the main *voenkomat* responsibilities. One respondent did observe a *voenkomat* officer attempting to impart basic military commands to non-Russian speaking inductees. Despite such interesting insights, however, the data regarding pre-induction training available to us at present are sketchy and rather inconclusive and do not permit meaningful generalizations.

More information is available on in-service training and education. General education levels in the combat units are said to be rather high. Most conscripts, especially in the high technology services, have a high school education and only very few have not finished the basic seven-year schooling. Among the non-Slavs the nationalities with the highest educational levels are the Jews, Balts, Soviet Germans, and the urban youth from the Caucasus. The lowest educational standards are observed in Central Asian recruits and rural youth in general. Apart from political education, which is universal, educational activities in the armed forces are conducted to prepare specialists in the various military and technical areas. Soldiers most likely to be selected for specialized training are those with polytechnical high school education, and minorities do not figure prominently in such courses.

The types of technical training that apparently appeal most to non-Russian draftees is training that imparts skills applicable to civilian life after the service. Several respondents noted in this respect that training for automotive maintenance and repair and driver's education are especially popular among minorities.

As far as strictly military preparation is concerned there is considerable, although still inconclusive, evidence that many non-Slavs (especially Central Asians and Caucasians) receive little, if any, training upon completion of their basic training and are used in primarily supportive capacities in the combat units. Should future research prove this to be a consistent practice, a thorough examination of its implications for both military effectiveness and inter-ethnic relations is called for. Not totally unexpected was the revelation that there are no organized Russian language courses for those of the non-Russians whose language skills are poor, or at least there weren't any in the units in

which our respondents served. This, again, is a conspicuous policy whose motivations need elucidation.*

No doubts exist with respect to the military training and preparedness of the construction troops. All our interviewees unequivocally indicate that *stroibat* recruits are either not trained militarily at all or receive the most rudimentary weapons instruction at the very beginning of their terms. The following comments describe the nature of military training, or lack of it, in construction units:

In my construction battalion in Tashkent we never saw any machine guns, pistols or rifles--nothing. There were no shooting exercises and we were never taught how to shoot. Only during the basic training were we given a submachine gun, shown its different parts and how to assemble and disassemble it. The whole thing lasted four hours, and we had no military training afterwards. All we had basically was just picks and shovels.

In my entire service I did not hold a single gun in my hands. Even when we took the military oath which is normally done holding a machine gun, we were without arms. I never fired a single shot. The only arms we had were bayonets and they were purely for decoration. Our only military training consisted of some marching drills at the beginning of the service. We were not shown any weapons nor was it explained to us how they function. So, evidently, we were not at all meant to be at the front.

Soldiers in my unit were given very weak military training. While I was their company commander they did not have any personal weapons and didn't know how to use them. One of the reasons they are not trusted with weapons is the very poor discipline in the *stroibat*.

It is obvious from the above that construction troop recruits, a majority of whom are non-Slavic minorities, remain civilians in uniform in terms of their military skills. Two obvious conclusions are, first, a majority of the non-Slavs seemingly receive little or no military training during their service; and second, perhaps as much as 20 percent of the Soviet armed forces can be described as being unarmed.

* See Section VI.

VI. LANGUAGE

Russian is the language of command of the Soviet Armed Forces. All commands are given and orders written in Russian. All training and propaganda materials directed at non-Russians are printed in Russian. All verbal instruction is in Russian. Officers speak only Russian, and the few non-Russian officers are chosen for their ability to communicate fluently in the Russian language. Even in units where one might find a high concentration of non-Russian servicemen, such as in construction battalions, all materials--regulations, documents, training devices, books, and newspapers--are in Russian. National language literature in non-Russian languages is not provided, although occasional pieces of non-military national literature sent from home do find their way into unit libraries. But according to all interviewees, the use of any but the Russian language--and even when not on duty--is discouraged, even punished. Several former officers who served in the Soviet Army in the last few years recalled that, although they had seen no official orders to this effect, they had received directives that the exclusive use of the Russian language in the units was military policy and that they were to punish soldiers who deviated from this rule. Because of the obvious ill feelings such an order would engender, these officers were told to deliver this directive to their troops "in the form of an expressed wish, not as an order." Nearly all respondents agreed that even when threatening punishment, officers could control the use of non-Russian languages only "in formation." Because officers are unable to control use of non-Russian languages, they in fact do little to discourage the speaking of such languages in off-duty situations.

Western broadcasts in non-Russian languages, mainly from Radio Liberty, compound this problem. Several respondents noted that the Kazakhs, Uzbeks, and Turkmen in their units listened to these broadcasts whenever possible. Estonian soldiers who somehow manage to become stationed near home often tune in Finnish television and Swedish radio. In other words, the hermetic Russian-language environment authorities try to create in the military is occasionally penetrated from the outside.

Eastern Ukrainians are an important exception to the rule that non-Russian servicemen use their own language whenever possible. In fact, Eastern Ukrainians often speak Russian on and off duty "proudly displaying their knowledge of Russian." Western Ukrainians, on the other hand, according to all observers, are much less willing to learn the Russian language, often responding in Ukrainian to questions in Russian.

Soldiers from different language families occasionally are observed using Russian as a *lingua franca*--for example, if a Georgian speaks with a Tatar--but this is a rarity. Rather, language barriers impose a *de facto* isolation on members of different language families and of non-Russians from Russians. In this sense, language strengthens the non-Russians' choice to remain apart. Turkic language speakers (Uzbeks, Kazahks, Kirghiz, Turkmen, Tatars, Azerbaidzhanis, Bashkirs, Karakalpaks, and others) usually find common linguistic ground in one or several of these languages--often Uzbek--and even Tadzhiks, whose language is Iranic, with few exceptions can communicate in Uzbek. Georgians, Armenians, Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians remain very much isolated in groups because of their unique languages.

The military reasons for insisting on a single language of command are obvious, but interviewees noted other reasons as well. This description by a former Soviet sergeant of Central Asian origin is typical of our sample:

Minorities could speak their languages freely in our construction battalion in Tashkent, but only among themselves. Sometimes, senior officers would come up to them and say, "Listen, speak only in Russian. We want to know what you're talking about." They may have thought the minorities were discussing some plot against them.

This respondent and others recalled that Russian officers at all levels often would force non-Russians to speak Russian and then mock the non-Russians' manner of speech and accent. "This was fun for them."

Several former high-ranking officers emphasized the long-term post-service benefits resulting from the Russian-only policy in

the armed forces. Even recruits who enter military service with no or little knowledge of Russian leave service after their mandatory term with some understanding of the language. This is consonant with overall Soviet language policy: to instruct all nationalities in the Russian language, thereby facilitating their ability to function in a Russian-dominated society and to speed their acceptance of Russian culture--a process usually referred to as Russification. Although the responses differed as to the proficiency of non-Russian servicemen in the Russian language at the end of their service, all agreed that this basic objective is met in a large majority of cases: Soldiers returning to nonmilitary life for the most part do have the ability to function at a basic level in Russian. Ukrainians, whose Slavic language is close to Russian, make most progress, both because of the affinities of Slavic languages and because they usually receive better training in Russian before entering the service. Central Asians, Kazakhs, and Turkic/Muslim Caucasians (Azerbaijanis, many north Caucasians), according to all accounts, perform only marginally in Russian at the end of their conscription, in part because they enter service with poor language preparation and training. Variations on the following observation are common:

In the special Construction and Assembly Association, based in Moscow, almost everybody had a secondary, or at least incompleting secondary education. As far as Kazakhs, Uzbeks, and other Central Asians were concerned, maybe they had seven years of school, but even then, their seven grades can by no means be compared with seven grades of a person from Russia. The Central Asian level is much lower, and the Russian relatively poor.

Concentrating non-Russian soldiers together, especially Central Asians, in particular kinds of units makes it easier for non-Russian recruits to conduct most facets of their daily lives in their native language at the expense of Russian.

Whether a new recruit comes from the rural areas of his republic or from the cities is a good indicator of his ability to use Russian

on his induction. City youth from all nationalities, for the most part, bring a greater command of that language into the service with them, although the amount of exposure of city dwellers of different nationalities to Russians and the Russian language varies from region to region. Ukrainian city youth, for example, generally possess the necessary language skills to function in Russian from the beginning of their service term, largely as a result of their long and intensive exposure to Russians and Russian culture in their cities. This clearly is the case in the Eastern Ukraine, although much less so in the cities of the Western Ukraine. Georgian, Armenian, and Baltic city youth, according to our respondents, have less ability, probably because of the strong emphasis on native language use in those republics. One Armenian respondent from Yerevan noted, for example, that he could speak "two or three words of Russian, not more" when he was inducted.* Recruits from national areas that have been the focus of intensive and prolonged efforts to inculcate Russian as a second language, such as those from Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan, fare better. Notes a former Uzbek sergeant who served in a construction battalion in Tashkent:

All Uzbeks and Tadzhiks [with whom I served] could understand Russian and could speak it brokenly. They study Russian in the [civilian] schools, even in the villages--everywhere in Russia. In Uzbek schools they study Russian as a foreign language. Tadzhiks also speak Russian, though poorly.

* He explained: "Currently in Armenia, the young people do not know Russian well. They study Russian in school, but do not speak--only very poorly--except for those Armenians who attend Russian school in Yerevan. Those who went to Armenian schools study grammar, but they cannot actually speak. All the lessons are conducted in Armenian and in an Armenian environment."

An officer from SRF Forces near Toksovo observed the same among Latvians with whom he served: "Many people did not understand Russian speech very well. For example, one was drafted in the Army from Riga. He finished Latvian school in Riga, where all subjects were taught in Latvian. There is a subject called 'Russian Language,' which is mandatory in the education of the Latvian school child, but, of course, his native language is Latvian, and he speaks Latvian at home."

From this and other, similar, responses, one gains a picture of these Soviet attempts to implant if not the use at least the knowledge of Russian in many peripheral regions of the USSR. And although this attempt has not yet been overwhelmingly successful, it apparently has had a significant effect.

Interviewees are almost unanimous in their observation that non-Russians, including Central Asians, Azerbaidzhanis, and north Caucasians can perform in the Russian language, if only marginally, on routine assignments. The Uzbek sergeant from the Tashkent construction battalion makes an important point, to which most of our respondents subscribe:

Russians mock and offend minorities when they cannot speak Russian. For example, they would ask them to bring a shovel, and they would bring a pick or a trowel. There were some people who did not know Russian, but after two or three months of service, they spoke Russian reasonably well. In other words, the Army served as a school for the Russian language. They studied the language in the Army.

Other respondents recalled non-Russians in various functions and locations who could communicate in Russian, however brokenly, on routine military matters. Examples include Ukrainians in a heavy artillery regiment, Azerbaidzhanis in the construction unit of an ABM brigade, Kazan Tatars in special construction and assembly units, Georgians in a maintenance section of a tank regiment, Central Asians in an SRF construction unit, Lithuanians and Karelians in radio units, Uzbeks in support units for a school for military dog training, and Adygei in paratrooper support units. Most respondents explained the ability of even those recruits with no previous Russian training to function in that language in routine assignments in terms of the inherent properties of Russian (or any) military language: short commands, limited vocabulary, and clear articulation.

Although routine military language is simple, technical military (and non-military) Russian is considerably more complex. Therefore,

only an insignificant number of non-Russians, especially Central Asians and other Turkic or Muslim peoples, are accepted to serve in technologically demanding roles, despite what many respondents referred to as the Soviet regime's efforts among the non-Russians to advance at least a symbolic number of them into these positions. Not surprisingly, the few non-Russians our respondents encountered in more advanced units--for example, in the SRF--could communicate easily in Russian. Although there are individual exceptions to this generalization, non-Russian recruits for whom Russian is a second language are able to "get by," but not much more, in the performance of their daily military chores. All respondents expressed a belief that the limited ability of many of the non-Russians to communicate in Russian could only complicate command control communications difficulties in a crisis situation, when orders could be complicated, hastily articulated, or unfamiliar.

An equally common observation is that, even when non-Russians are known to have language skills sufficient to perform routine duties, they often profess not to understand orders they find undesirable or inconvenient. For example:

- o Soldiers who do not speak or understand Russian well, especially those from Central Asia and the Caucasus, use this fact to justify serving badly. They say they cannot understand the commands, thereby avoiding the fulfillment of their duty.
- o Some Central Asians could speak Russian pretty well, but they did not want to understand the orders.
- o The minorities pretend that they understand Russian very poorly. They take advantage of the situation. When given an order, they answer: "I don't understand," and then the authorities can't do anything to them. They just say: "You are a *churka*,* get out of here."

* See Glossary.

- o The Azerbaidzhanis in this brigade came from small towns, not Baku. They did not speak Russian well, but understood everything. Maybe they did not want to speak Russian, because they did not want to serve. They were given very simple jobs, like preparing forage for pigs. They could not be used on complicated jobs. They didn't want this, so they would not understand.
- o Although Estonians are not hostile people, Estonian recruits treat Russians and the Russian language in a hostile manner. Many used to say: "I don't understand," though it was clear that they did.

The significance of dissimulation should not be underestimated, especially during periods when the army is being defeated or the tide of battle is uncertain. From the Soviet military planner's perspective, the *perception* that non-Russians cannot or will not perform satisfactorily in the Russian language is as important as the *certain knowledge* that they cannot. Although there can be little question that the Russian language has penetrated into many areas of the USSR where formerly it was unknown, techniques will have to be devised to test the ability of individual soldiers to function adequately in Russian, or one can be no more certain than before that this penetration has taken place, especially if the recruits themselves deny it. In this sense, soldiers who refuse to perform in Russian are no more useful than those who cannot and must be assigned accordingly. In fact, the former may be more troublesome and worrisome, because his abilities remain ambiguous and his loyalty questionable.

No respondent could recall anything resembling organized Russian-language training for non-Russian recruits once they had reported to the unit, which would be one way of determining and cross-checking language skills. Rather, it is assumed that recruits will assimilate enough Russian through intensive contact with the language in formation training sessions and political lessons. An Armenian respondent who served with other Armenians from Yerevan in an automotive plant near Khmelniki observed that this assimilative process works well in some cases but not in others. He and his Armenian friends "had a very

difficult time studying at the school [for automotive training], particularly in the first year," because they spoke no Russian on induction. "We had to sit and listen to lectures in Russian on automobiles. We were punished if we fell asleep. We learned how to listen; we learned Russian." He notes that it took the several Central Asians much longer to learn Russian, "but within a year they could speak reasonably well." This response, which emphasizes the difficulties that are experienced by nationalities where the emphasis on native language use is still a strong one, and the general unwillingness or ineptitude of Central Asians to learn the Russian language, is symptomatic of our sample.

To alleviate the immediate problems associated with inducting large numbers of non-Russian-speaking troops, some *voenkomats* are charged with inculcating local inhabitants of draftable age with a minimum set of Russian words and military phrases. It is not known if this is a service-wide policy.

It is difficult to distinguish when punishment is meted out for poor Russian language use and when it is the result of national or racial discrimination. Clearly, according to all respondents, discrimination or punishment on the basis of a poor command of the Russian language can and does serve as a mask for other kinds of discrimination. Those recruits who understand Russian least--Turkic or Muslim minorities--also are prime targets for other kinds of ridicule. An underdeveloped ability or an unwillingness to speak Russian on duty (and occasionally even off duty) earns a soldier such duties as shoveling, chopping wood, kitchen duty, or other unpleasant maintenance details. Some respondents recall spending time in the guard house for language offenses. Nearly all remember observing commanders and sergeants who publicly criticized non-Russians--often with racial or national epithets--for apparent communications failures. Fights between Russians and non-Russians--again touched off by language problems--are reported to be common.

The language problem continues to be one of the most important impediments to the use of larger numbers of non-Russians in line positions and in technologically advanced functions. Nothing in our sample suggests that the Soviet leadership has changed or upgraded its basic approach.

VII. ETHNIC-RELATED ALCOHOL AND NARCOTICS ABUSE

Our respondents agree that excessive consumption of liquor and other alcohol-based substances in the Soviet army is primarily by Slavs (Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians). Balts are reported to consume considerably less than the Slavs, and the Muslim or Turkic peoples use almost no alcohol substances at all. Alcoholic abuse among Slavs in the military, based on our interview sample, can only be described as epidemic and its implications for military efficiency far-reaching.*

Narcotic abuse in the Soviet armed forces is distinctly ethnic. Those of our respondents who served in predominantly Slavic units remarked that narcotic use was rare. Units with concentrations of Central Asians and Muslim Caucasians, however, are characterized by the widespread use of different kinds of narcotics indigenous to these areas. Several respondents believed that Central Asians and, to a lesser extent Azerbaiddzhanis, also obtained narcotic substances from China and Iran, but at this time this assertion is impossible to verify. For the most part, different kinds of narcotics are brought into military units by the Central Asians themselves, sent to them from home disguised as or hidden in other materials, or are brought by relatives who happen to visit the Central Asians in their units.

Narcotic substances most often described are:

- o Anasha -- according to most reports, anasha is derived from the hemp plant and is similar or identical to marijuana in effect. Apparently, it is abundant in Central Asia and some parts of the Caucasus, inexpensive, and easy to obtain, even for soldiers. Anasha is smoked like marijuana.
- o Plan -- also an herb, possibly matured anasha. Is also derivative from hemp and is apparently a concentrated and more potent form of anasha. It is also smoked.

* A separate report will address the issue of alcohol abuse in detail.

- o Hashish -- same as the substance known in the West. Hashish is more expensive than anasha or plan and is difficult to obtain.

Another substance that respondents report is widely consumed by Russians and non-Russians alike is cheffir, referred to as "narcotic tea." Cheffir is made by brewing a packet of tea, about 50 grams, in a cup of water, and then drinking the highly concentrated liquid.

Smoking narcotic plants appears to be nearly as widespread among Central Asian and Muslim Caucasian nationalities as drinking vodka and other alcohol-based substances is for Slavs. One respondent with considerable experience in a predominantly Central Asian construction unit observed that "smoking the herb is a whole system for them." Other respondents noted that smoking anasha, plan, or hashish is ritualistic for some Soviet Asians: "Small bunches would regularly slip into the woods by themselves and light up."

Anasha, plan, and hashish give "highs" of different intensity. When taken in conjunction with vodka or cheffir, as is occasionally practiced, the effect could be startlingly serious, according to several respondents who had witnessed the use of such a mixture. The following incident involving a group of Kazakhs was recalled: "They got really high. One Kazakh started shooting out the windows of the headquarters building. He missed every one, but nobody forgot the incident." Several other, less violent, incidents are reported, suggesting that the drug problem, especially among Central Asians, causes military control and discipline problems. An expanded interview sample should shed light on these implications.

VIII. RELIGION AND NATIONALITY

Respondents agree that, with few exceptions, religious feelings among servicemen of different nationalities are for the most part sublimated for fear of punishment and abuse. Among ethnic Russians, religious expression is said to be the weakest, probably because there are proportionately fewer real believers among them and because open or semi-open expression of belief is easy to detect. Respondents stress that because there are no opportunities to practice religion in any organized fashion in the armed forces, the few religious Russians (who are mostly Orthodox, with a sprinkling of Baptists) can observe traditions and rites only privately and on an individual basis. There is little proselytism, none openly. Respondents agree that Russian believers in uniform pose little threat to military discipline.

For Muslims and Baptists, the situation is considerably more serious, and in both cases religious practice is closely bound up with national consciousness and customs. Like Orthodox Russians, Muslim Central Asians and Muslim Caucasians seldom display their religious practice openly. Rather, traditional Muslim customs occasionally conflict with the Soviet military requirements, and this brings them to light. For example, respondents recalled Central Asians objecting to having to eat pork, citing their religion as justification for refusing it. Violence of an unspecified nature occasionally resulted from confrontations between soldiers and military authorities for this reason. One respondent noted that this problem was overcome in his unit in the following way. Muslim recruits who refused to eat pork were fed nothing for several days. Meanwhile, drill sergeants put them through unusually strenuous and continuous exercises until the recruits' physical strength was exhausted. According to our respondent, the Muslim recruits then accepted pork as part of their regular diet. Other Soviet Muslims have been witnessed refusing to take the military oath or to undertake military training on the basis that their religion forbids them to bear arms, although this stand would seem to have little basis in

Islamic religious doctrine. An expanded interview sample, which includes more former Soviet servicemen of Central Asian or Caucasian origin, should illuminate these phenomena more fully.

There is considerably more information in our sample about recruits of the Baptist creed. Most respondents identified the Baptists as a particular discipline problem in the military for two reasons. First, religious expression among them is more open than among believers of other kinds, indeed at times openly defiant. Second, most Baptists are Western Ukrainians, for whom being a Baptist is more than an expression of faith. It is both an anti-Russian and anti-Soviet identity and an affirmation of their own nationalism. This is a constant theme throughout our interviews, that Western Ukrainian Baptists are vocal, self-assertive, unbending in the face of military authority, and thought to be disloyal. Many respondents recall witnessing the refusal of Western Ukrainian Baptists to take the military oath, or to take part in any military training, professing that they already had made a vow to God and to entertain any other oath would be a breach of their religious law. Similarly, their commitment to God prohibits them from bearing arms.

Of course, it is impossible to generalize about where religion breaks off and nationalism begins. But it is evident from our sample that at least in the case of Western Ukrainian Baptists, the two notions reinforce one another. Active proselytism of non-Baptist Western Ukrainians by Baptists in the armed forces has been observed, as have prayer meetings and other religious gatherings. Respondents report that whenever possible Baptists listen to religious broadcasts from Western countries.

Baptist activities in the armed forces are stopped whenever observed and are severely punished. Those Western Ukrainian Baptists who refuse to take the military oath or to undergo military training are sent to *stroibats* and other service units in Siberia and other undesirable locations. One respondent remembers a Western Ukrainian Baptist who refused to participate in military training and was sentenced to five years in prison. Fights between atheist Russians and Baptists are not uncommon, according to our respondents, and officers do little to discourage this kind of spontaneous punishment. However, most respondents agree that the military authorities have been unsuccessful in their attempts to quell

Baptist feeling in the ranks, partly because of its nationalist characteristic. Most agree that Baptist or Western Ukrainian dissent in the armed forces is on the rise and may pose a problem for military discipline and control.

IX. INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIANS AND NON-RUSSIANS

In the eyes of Soviet military propagandists, the Soviet armed forces function as a socialization instrument through which the social consciousness of individuals and groups of diverse ethnic origins is elevated and homogenized in accordance with the overreaching objective of developing "new Soviet men." This new *Homo sovieticus* will have his nationality defenses stripped away, and will come to see himself as part of an integrated multinational community of like-thinking, like-feeling peoples whose underlying motivations are not national narrowmindedness, but "Soviet patriotism," a higher plane of human awareness at which the commonality of interest of all peoples of the Soviet Union is taken for granted. Although some national distinctions of a cultural kind will remain in this new social-political milieu, even these will be sublimated to "the friendship of peoples."

How well do the armed forces advance this objective? Based on their own service experiences and what they know of their friends' experiences, our respondents dealt with the issue of inter-ethnic relations in the armed forces in considerable detail, providing both specific personal accounts of various kinds of ethnic interaction and more generalized thoughts on the armed forces as a socialization instrument and ethnic equalizer. The clear consensus to emerge from these interviews is that in Soviet peacetime armed forces, ethnic conflict is frequent and often severe; and as a socialization instrument, the armed forces in most cases fail to bring about a homogenization of interest and a leveling of ethnic consciousness. Rather, ethno-national distinctions in a large majority of cases appear to be enhanced by the experience of serving in a Russian- and Slavic-dominated Soviet military environment.

This revelation should come as no surprise to anyone who has served in a multi-ethnic armed service, as both authors have. Extended close-quarter service frequently exacerbates relationships among individuals of different races, ethnic background, and linguistic family, particularly

when a pervasive if unofficial hierarchy based on national origin is very much in evidence. Moreover, individual ethnic grievances usually can find support. Because of the way non-Russians are recruited and assigned to units, it is common for ten or more individuals of the same ethno-racial background who speak the same language--and who, in fact, may even come from the same village or city--to end up in the same military unit. Thus inherent distinctions, which may become diluted without support, usually are reinforced. Interviewees expressed surprise and amusement that Western analysts could believe that the Soviet army--with its clear and profound ethnic, linguistic, racial, and cultural divisions--has been able to avoid the tensions and conflict characteristic of other multi-ethnic environments simply because Soviet military propagandists continue to reach the inevitable conclusion that it has.

All respondents pointed to instances of ethnic-based conflict observed within their military units during their periods of services. In all cases except two, they considered ethnic conflict to be a continual and significant discipline problem for Soviet commanders. The two respondents who dissented from this general view emphasized the special conditions under which they served. One served in a high-technology, staffed unit, where the number of non-Russians (except Eastern Ukrainians) was very low, and where the presence of large numbers of high-ranking officers was an incentive to non-commissioned and junior commissioned officers to impede the outbreak of the kind of ethnic violence that characterizes regular line military units. The second exception served in an SRF detachment, in which there were a number of Balts in a support capacity. Here, "there was no conflict between Russians, Latvians and Lithuanians, because there was no contact between them. No relationships of any kind. Lithuanians stuck together and spoke only in Lithuanian. Latvians stuck together and spoke only Latvian. The same for the few Estonians. There was no contact with these people."

The banding together of non-Russians with co-ethnics is a common theme throughout the interview sample. In part, the reason is linguistic, as noted above. In part, it is caused by Russian treatment of non-Russians, as described below. But several respondents note an

important temporal factor affecting ethnic clustering, or banding together: it occurs almost universally among conscripts who serve their obligatory or two- to three-year terms. Those few who serve by choice beyond their initial conscription or enlistment period rapidly come to place career advancement considerations ahead of ethnic ones; that is, they look beyond the ethnic prejudices of the one-term soldier. Moreover, it would appear that those non-Russians who continue their service beyond the first term are themselves accepted to a much greater degree as equals in the ranks by Russians. A non-Russian sergeant expressed the prevailing view:

After the first term of service, the relationship among nationalities becomes more equal; all become more like brothers. During the first term of service one can feel that Uzbeks make friends only with Uzbeks, Russians with Russians, Jews with Jews, and so forth. But in subsequent service, this is leveled out.

All respondents note, however, that the number of minorities who reenlist--except Eastern Ukrainians--is so small as to ensure their acquiescence to Russian domination. Indeed, it is the *sine qua non* for reenlistment.

Here again, all respondents point to Eastern Ukrainians as an exception. Although these non-Russians blend more naturally with Russians from the beginning of their service for linguistic and other reasons, they are perhaps the most career-oriented of all Soviet servicemen, representing something akin to a military caste in non-commission grades. Consequently, whereas other non-Russians generally come to accommodate themselves to Russian domination of the armed forces and to be accepted by Russians, Eastern Ukrainians who serve beyond one enlistment or conscription period are reported to be intensely competitive for promotions and positions of power and authority. As the main source of competition is Russian soldiers, Eastern Ukrainians who are intent on military careers come to see Russian domination as an impediment to their advancement in ranks. Respondents report that the intensity of the Eastern Ukrainian drive for status and position in the armed forces has resulted in what might be termed a Ukrainization of the sergeant corps, where the interests

of the Ukrainian professional soldiers are advanced above all others, where national nepotism is unmistakable, and where discrimination toward other nationalities by Ukrainians, especially toward Russians, is pronounced.

For the overwhelming majority of non-Russians who serve on a one-term basis the forces that work to accommodate military career seekers from all nationalities to the dominant Russian orientation of the armed forces do not operate. To the contrary, our respondents painted a vivid picture of adjustment by minorities to short-term service that is made possible by the presence of co-ethnics in their military units.

- o Minorities have their own lives. People gather in small groups, and there is no contact between them.
- o Always when you are granted a pass, you go with your own kind--your friends. If you are a Russian, with a Russian, Ukrainian with a Ukrainian, a Kazakh with a Kazakh, never together.
- o Very few Russians have friends from the minority groups, whereas minorities are always together in groups.
- o Generally speaking, all nationalities except Russians stick together in the Army.

These respondents and others insist that most non-Russians leave the service at the end of their conscription period with a heightened sense of ethnic awareness, not a lessened one.

Some minorities bring a strong national awareness to the military with them, where under conditions of close, often unpleasant contact with Russians, this sentiment is strengthened and renewed. Other minorities receive especially rude and harsh treatment by Russians in the course of their normal duty, simply because they are minorities, and this treatment reinforces their own ethnic identity while inculcating strong anti-Russian feelings in many of them. Thus, one of the most significant features, indeed a paradox, of the Soviet armed forces as a vehicle for ethnic integration is that: "Russians never let minorities forget about their nationality, their ethnic origins. Russians

constantly remind them that, as minorities, they are inferior and that the Russians are the bosses."

Those minority ethnic groups that bring a finely developed sense of nationality into the armed forces with them for the most part are representatives of what might be termed "historic nations," or nations with a history of statehood or independent existence. Respondents are unanimous in pointing to Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians as having the most impenetrable national consciousness, followed closely by Georgians and Armenians. According to respondents, these groups practice an intense insularity from other nationalities, especially from the Russians who, in turn, seem to reciprocate. The following separate assessments of Baltic soldiers are typical of our sample:

- o I have rarely seen such a deep devotion to one another. They try as a national group to be together at all times. They were very good in the military service, model campaigners, absolutely impeccable soldiers, and disciplined. Russians respected the Balts because they are strong and very European, although the Balts absolutely hate the Russians. The Russians I served with felt a sort of inferiority complex toward them.
- o The Russian attitude toward Balts is always special.... They seem too educated, too neat, too German-like. They behave differently and speak differently. There is something foreign about them, something not Soviet. They always protect one another. One always distrusts them.

An Armenian respondent observed the same kind of aloofness among Armenian soldiers with whom he served, illustrating some of the depth of their historic national awareness, and how contact with Russians affects it:

When we used to get together and talk among ourselves, one Armenian guy inevitably would say something like: "Look at those Russians who are so proud of themselves. Only nine hundred years ago they were hanging from the trees by their tails. At that time we had already achieved a whole civilization, and the Jews already had their bible; the Russians hadn't even reached the ground from their trees." We were all very conscious of this matter. It does not stem necessarily from being well educated. It is deep inside our souls.

As these and other responses demonstrate, soldiers from "historic nations" probably share the anti-Soviet, anti-Russian prejudice of their nonmilitary population. This prejudice--based in part on attempted Russification of their cultures, the migration of large numbers of Russians to their national territories, and the memories of times past, when their national cultures flourished in the absence of Russian domination--is manifest, perhaps even exaggerated, in the military environment, where non-Russian soldiers have no choice but to live side by side with Russians.

Paradoxically, Volga Tatars, who have been integrated into the Russian Army for centuries, who speak Russian to a greater degree than many minorities, and who traditionally have been admitted into the officer's corps and entrusted with the responsibility usually reserved for Slavs, appear to be following this same pattern, according to respondents who served with them. Volga Tatars observed by respondents were considered to be "actively hostile" toward Russians and Slavs and banded together tightly. This is an interesting and significant trend that a larger sample probably will illuminate.

Other non-Russians appear to be less anti-Russian or anti-Soviet when inducted--largely because they have had less preservice contact with Russians--but because of the unpleasant treatment they receive at the hands of Russians in the ranks, this ambiguity rapidly transforms itself into a genuine, often intense hatred of Russians and military service. According to all respondents, recruits most affected by adverse treatment at the hands of Russians and other Slavs are Central Asian and Caucasian Turkic or Muslim minorities.

From the interviews it is clear that discrimination directed against Central Asians and other Soviet Muslims is multifaceted and complex, combining in itself cultural, historic, ethnic, linguistic, and racial factors. Of these, the last is the most often remarked upon. In fact, all respondents commented on the Russians' and other Slavs' attitude of racial superiority toward Central Asians and other Soviet Muslims, and the former's use of racial epithets when dealing with these soldiers.* Racially inspired attitudes almost always translate

* See Glossary.

into real discriminatory practices toward Central Asians and other Turkic or Muslim peoples in the ranks: undesirable job assignments, social discrimination at all levels, more frequent and more severe punishment, and poor living conditions generally. A Russian junior sergeant from a construction battalion describes what appears to be a typical situation:

From the beginning we, the white people, considered ourselves somewhat higher and with more privileges than the *churkas*....Words speak for themselves. That is why, when it is necessary to do some unpleasant work, say, clean a toilet, a Kazakh would be sent and the Russians would make him do it....It was the same at all levels. At a table in the military dining room Russians always take the first turn. Kazakhs and Uzbeks always the last. First, we will take, then you. The same holds true for who is going to sleep where. Kazakhs and Uzbeks will be sent to the most uncomfortable corner....This is done by the soldiers spontaneously among themselves. It has always been this way in the Army. If I worked with a screwdriver, the Central Asian works with a shovel.

Significantly, Soviet officers seldom engaged in overtly discriminatory behavior or displayed attitudes of this type--at least not in public. A former junior officer noted that all junior officers were warned against such behavior explicitly, although, as we shall see, at least some of them are given quite different instructions regarding how they are to treat ethnic relations between non-Russians. A former Russian private, who served in an artillery regiment near Gorky, describes the situation this way:

As far as junior officers are concerned, if a soldier does not insult them, does not touch them at all, then nationality does not matter, even if that soldier has done something wrong. Sometimes, a young lieutenant will say something like, "Hey you! You can do that in Uzbekistan but not here." However, a captain or a major would never dare to say this. This is personal. Talking among themselves, officers and sergeants often are overheard to say something like, "What do you think of that *chernozhopa*?" But there is no official talk like this, especially not in formation.

According to several respondents, officers at all levels attempt to avoid becoming embroiled in nationality or racial disputes of their men. "If an officer interferes in nationality-related conflict," noted a former soldier of Armenian descent, "he always finds himself in an awkward situation, as the officers inevitably are Russians who cannot choose sides in a conflict of this kind without causing serious problems." A Russian Jew explains one such incident:

One day at the unit's amateur concert hall, a Western Ukrainian was sitting behind me who continued talking after the concert began. I asked him to quiet down a bit. The Ukrainian called me a dirty Jew, so I turned around in full view of about 70 people, officers and soldiers, and punched him in the face. Everyone heard and saw what happened. No one would interfere, neither soldiers nor officers.

Military authorities "are not tuned" to ethnic conflict in the ranks, several respondents remarked, for the simple reason that if they attempted to intervene in conflicts of this nature, it would be a tacit admission that a problem exists in their command. Some respondents believe that military commanders saw interference in ethnic conflict as an admission that their attempts to mold their subordinates into an ethnically harmonious force had failed--hence, their reticence to address this issue. Others noted the implications for a career advancement for officers whose service file cites the subject's inability to keep ethnic dissent under control in his unit.

Many cases of ethnic conflict cannot be ignored, however. As noted earlier, all respondents witnessed different degrees of what they identified as ethnic conflict in various branches of the armed services and at various duty stations. In even the best-managed, most fully staffed, and most highly educated units, such as SRF units, conflict that has a distinct ethnic dimension is seen to lurk just below the surface at all times, and occasionally to break into the open. In units of this type, ethnic conflict tends to be more muted, less of a mass phenomenon, and seldom demonstrated publicly because of the high concentrations of Russians in these units, the higher educational standards of the soldiers, the larger number of career-oriented individuals, and the proportionally greater number of officers in the staff.

Ethnic dissent and conflict in regular army units are described as much more common and violent. Nearly three-quarters of our sample recalled witnessing or participating in ethnic-based incidents of a severity for which there are few known analogs among modern, large, professional armies. The main participants in the reported ethnic clashes appear to be Russians and occasionally Ukrainians against Caucasians, Central Asians, and Tatars from the Volga region. Again, the severity of these encounters at least partially are the result of the recruitment system, which often sends groups of ten or more non-Russian recruits from the same ethnic group and often from the same region to specific military units. These micro-concentrations of non-Russians clearly push the violence level of what might begin as individual clashes higher by providing affronted non-Russians with a small but readily available pool of support.

The current sample suggests some strong trend lines of ethnic conflict, but the sample is not sufficiently well developed at this stage of the research to draw well-tested generalizations other than the two observations made above--namely, that ethnic conflict involving violence is more common than has generally been considered to be the case, and that the protagonists form a fairly distinct Slavic-Turkic

or Muslim dichotomy. The following excerpts from interviews illustrate these points:

- o The soldiers from Kabardino-Balkar are the wildest people. They would cut the throat of an officer, suck his blood, and finish him off. One I knew broke the head of an officer with a chair and went to bed as if nothing had happened. Often, they were taken to disciplinary battalions because of their behavior. Many of them refused to use guns.
- o I remember a case in Petrozavodsk at the regiment aviation school, where a sergeant [name supplied] insulted the Chuvash very often. There were also some Tatars there, and one of them took the side of the Chuvash. He hit the sergeant in the face, more people came, and a big fight broke out. The authorities did not want to interfere much in it, and only the victims, the Chuvash, were punished. They were all sent to the punishment room, where other sergeants and escort soldiers broke their kidneys.
- o Udmurts and Chuvash spoke Russian very poorly. They were constantly beaten and punished for that.
- o In the majority of cases commanders set Russian and Ukrainian sergeants on those Churkas. I remember one Russian and one Ukrainian lieutenant who beat the minority soldiers unmercifully when all the rest were present. After this, they would set the sergeants on these soldiers.
- o The Adygei in our paratroop unit treated Russians as enemies, and vice versa. Everyone hated the Adygei. Shortly after they arrived in the unit, some soldiers beat the Adygei up very badly....The Adygei did not know what authority meant; a sergeant or a lieutenant was nothing to them....The antagonism between the Adygei and the Ukrainian sergeants was particularly strong and violent.
- o In an artillery warehouse unit near Murom there was a very severe fight involving about 35 to 40 people. The situation developed over several weeks, with Russians and Ukrainians on one side, and Daghestanis and some passive Central Asians on the other. It finally came to a big fight, which was investigated very thoroughly.

- o I participated in a big fight in a radio reconnaissance regiment near Riga between Russians and Tatars. Because of some trifle, a Russian and a Tatar began fighting. A Tatar spread the word that one of his own was being beaten. The others turned out, and the fight turned into a major incident.
- o A Kazakh from my unit [a mortar company] had a girl-friend in the village. A Russian guy won her from the Kazakh. A bunch of Kazakhs went into his barracks and beat the Russian up time after time. Nobody paid any attention. Finally, the Russians retaliated. A group of them went into the Kazakh barracks and smashed everything, broke the Kazakh's spine, legs, arms, head--made 15 cripples. It was very serious. Officers from the division came, and there was a big fuss. But they couldn't punish anybody. The case was closed. It was like a mutiny.
- o Fights, even with arms, went on all the time at the top secret nuclear installation near Tomsk with Churkas from the construction battalions.
- o This Vikhresku [a Moldavian] was a bright and talented guy, a musician and a poet. One day another Moldavian soldier was badly beaten by a Russian lieutenant. Several of his ribs were broken, and he was sent to a medical unit. Vikhresku caught up with the lieutenant and killed him with a machine gun. After that, he set fire to headquarters and shot himself.
- o People from Central Asia display their disobedience as a form of sabotage....We had a case in the Tamansk Division in Volokolamsk near Moscow. It was a model division. It had Regiment 130, which is shown to foreigners.... Two Central Asians beat regular soldiers to get their Kolishnikov machine guns, discs, and cartridges, and off they went....They walked all through Russia with these machine guns. Finally, they were caught, and there was an exchange of fire. But they had walked from Moscow to Saratov! Special troops were raised to hunt them, the forests were combed. The Central Asians thought they were oppressed because they were not Russians. They had been punished many times in such a way that their patience was exhausted, so they set off for home.

- o A young Uzbek soldier whom everyone picked on because he was racially and culturally different, finally had enough. One day when he was supposed to go on guard duty, he took a machine gun from the rack and ambushed the entire guard detail, killing several and wounding all the rest. The *churka* should have killed them all, but his military training was pretty bad. Anyway, the military judge agreed that he was abused, and so he got fifteen years. They didn't shoot him.

Nearly every interviewee participated in or witnessed incidents of this kind, suggesting that violent conflict between soldiers of different nationalities is common and, because of the reluctance of officers to intervene, poorly controlled.

RELATIONS BETWEEN NON-RUSSIANS

For the most part, respondents could recall few indications or incidents of ethnic dissent or violence directed by non-Russians at other non-Russians. Where incidents could be recalled, in almost every case the protagonists were Georgians and Armenians, and occasionally Armenians and Azerbaidzhanis. Although fights involving individuals of these nationalities were reported, there appear to be few or no mass confrontations of the scope of those between Russians and Central Asians. Two respondents observed occasional fighting among Central Asians in the construction battalions in which they served, but noted that these were usually not violent or enduring conflicts. Another respondent observed what appeared to him to be the elevated social status of Turkmen among the Central Asians in his construction battalion and that this distinction sometimes led to short-lived clashes between individual Turkmen and Kazakhs and Kirghiz. Significantly--and this underlines the racial motives in clashes of this kind--Balts and Central Asians who serve together often come into conflict. Observes a sergeant who served in the Ussuriysk region:

There was constant tension between the Latvians in our unit and the Central Asians. After a particularly vicious and insulting verbal attack on the Central Asians, the Latvians were attacked with knives, and

a slaughter ensued. This conflict went on for several months before it could be brought to a stop, and many people were injured. The officers were aware of the problem, of course, but they would do nothing. They can't put everyone in the guardhouse, for if they do, high-level authorities at the division will find out. So they try to hide the facts.

Other respondents arrived at a different and provocative conclusion as to why officers, mostly Russians, seldom interfere in conflicts between non-Russians. Explained one:

Authorities encourage these inter-ethnic hostilities because it is easier for them to control a multinational society in which people of different nationalities do not understand one another. They wouldn't be secure if, for example, Georgians, Armenians, and Azerbaidzhanis lived in harmony. Some officers receive political instruction in this policy; it is sufficient if only a few officers in a regiment know of it.

Another, a former junior lieutenant in a construction battalion, who served until 1976, notes that this policy is intuitive, if not direct:

The tendency is such that in order to improve control over soldiers, conflicts among them must be encouraged in every possible way. The most important goal is to avoid any feelings of solidarity by soldiers of different nationalities. There are no instructions or directions to this effect, or at least I received none. But one knows that it must be done this way.

RELATIONS BETWEEN SOLDIERS AND LOCAL POPULATIONS

Fighting between representatives of the local population and soldiers from nearby military units is a common phenomenon in many countries. The USSR is no exception: "There was not a single village where the local population did not fight with the soldiers. They take sticks, we take belts." But, this respondent continues, "for minorities it would be an even more acute problem, because many of them are of a different race and generally are kind of weird people. Many people in some villages

where I was stationed [Central Russia] had never seen a Kazakh or an Uzbek before." Other respondents echoed this observation, noting that the same kind of racial discrimination that operates in the ranks operates as well between Central Asian and Caucasian (usually excepting Georgians and Armenians) soldiers and the Slavic populations among whom most serve. "Concerning the Adygei," noted the respondent who served with them in a paratroop regiment near Tula, "the local population did not see them. The Adygei did not dare to come to the dancing parties. They were afraid to speak to Russian women, because they feared being beaten by the locals." A Russian who served on the Sino-Soviet border in the late 1960s and early 1970s recalls that the attitude of the local Russian population toward the minorities in service there changed negatively, as Soviet-Chinese hostility intensified. Similarly, the Slavic soldiers began to take a more strident view of the dark-skinned, local non-Russians: "When the soldiers saw yellow skin, something darker than a white face, they used to say, 'Who are you? Maybe you're a Chinese.' It was a very bad attitude." This would appear to be the pattern wherever dark-skinned non-Russians served in Russian- or Slavic-dominated locales. It is yet another reason why the ethnic identities of non-Russians in service are reinforced, and the notion of a "Soviet man" weakened; and why non-Russians of all kinds, especially Central Asians and other Muslim or Turkic peoples band together in mutual support. Even white-skinned non-Russians encounter a certain, although different, kind of hostility from the local Russians. A Latvian respondent who left service only recently recalls:

In the central part of Russia the mass of people are uneducated, so very often they don't know where Latvia is located. Is it in the Soviet Union, or abroad? They asked us what kind of money we have, heard us speaking a different language, and could not understand why these people should be so different, and how it was that they could live in another republic. This happened often. They looked at us as strange creatures, who come from somewhere where the Baltic is, and who call themselves Latvians.

But the real conflict between Soviet soldiers and local populations would appear to be the opposite: Russian and Slavic soldiers are unwelcome among the local populations of many of the non-Russian regions of the USSR. Antagonism toward Russian soldiers does not appear to be equally strong in all parts of the USSR, with the most fervent expressions coming in the West and gradually becoming diminished as one encounters the Asian populations. This might be explained by the frequent experience of those respondents who served in Central Asia or the Caucasus: They were not permitted to mix with the local populations, except on very rare occasions. One respondent noted that in the Caucasus and Kazakhstan the local population was helpful to common soldiers of all nationalities but not to officers whom they disliked.

Several respondents recalled that in the Western Ukraine "the locals hated all the people in the army. They remembered the German occupation and thought of the Soviet Army as the next occupiers. They made no distinction between Russians and non-Russians, although of course most were Russians. When there was interaction with the locals, it always ended up in a fight. They despised the Russians and the Russians hated them." Most report the same attitude of the native inhabitants of the Baltic states and Moldavia toward Russian soldiers. One respondent recalled that his commanding officer at an anti-aircraft brigade in Estonia was an Estonian major who probably had been chosen for duty there to serve as a liaison between the mostly Slavic troops and the local population, who were extremely hostile toward the soldiers. No other situations of this kind in other parts of the USSR are reported in our sample.

Other respondents witnessed or participated in ethnic-based incidents involving armed forces personnel and non-Russian local inhabitants. Except for the Baltic area, where conflict appears to be frequent and often violent, the evidence is too sketchy at this time to generalize with confidence.

X. SUMMARY OF TRENDS AND FORCE EFFECTIVENESS HYPOTHESES

While cautioning again about the preliminary nature of our findings, we stress that our experience in other projects relying on interviews as the major source of information has shown that trends appearing early in the research usually are sustained by later interviews, although with some adjustment, additional nuance, and much richer factual material. The major trends observable from our first year's interview sample can be summarized as follows:

- o Recruitment and Stationing Practices:
 - ensure Slavic majorities in combat units;
 - concentrate non-Slavs in construction units and support capacities in combat units;
 - isolate non-Russian servicemen from their national territories;
 - indicate a strong over-representation of Eastern Ukrainians among non-commissioned officers.
- o Education and Training Practices:
 - limit military training to construction and support troops;
 - ensure an overwhelmingly Slavic officer corps;
 - discriminate *ipso facto* against non-Russians and through specific quotas.
- o Language Policies and Practices:
 - successfully inculcate non-Russians with a limited but functional Russian language ability by the end of a conscription term;
 - allow for no identifiable in-service systematic Russian language training;
 - cannot prohibit the use of non-Russian languages;
 - heighten ethnic tensions and ensure national insularity.

- o Inter-ethnic relations in service are characterized by:
 - the banding together of distinct nationalities;
 - systematic discrimination on linguistic, ethnic, and racial grounds by Slavs against non-Slavs;
 - a high level of ethnic-related violence;
 - official unwillingness to intervene except in the most extreme cases;
 - the enhancement of national self-awareness for the one-term serviceman.

In the second year's research, we shall concentrate on expanding the size and quality of the interview sample. With this information, we shall attempt to assess the implications of the ethnic factor in the Soviet armed forces on Soviet warfighting ability, internal discipline and control, the opportunities for technological adaptation, and command-control-communications issues. The findings from the first year's effort suggest a number of force effectiveness hypotheses that might be investigated fruitfully. These include:

- o Short Term:
 - support force reliability;
 - basic training shortcomings;
 - inadequate individual training.
- o Long Term:
 - unit training weaknesses;
 - limitations of the introduction and mastering of modern technology;
 - potential limitations of force size;
 - heightened internal security dilemmas.
- o Combat-Related Possibilities:
 - large-scale defections;
 - "second battle" weaknesses;
 - disproportionate combat losses for Russian personnel on the ground.

o Miscellaneous:

- ethnic or racial riots;
- minority conflict with local populations;
- mutiny.

These hypotheses constitute a tentative outline for on-going research.

GLOSSARY

The following are terms used frequently when addressing non-Russians in the armed forces:

- ARMIASHKA*: Literally, "little Armenians"; used pejoratively.
- CHERNOZHOP(Y)*: Literally, "black asses"; used pejoratively like the English term "nigger." Can refer to Armenian, Georgian, and Azerbaidzhani Caucasians, but usually to Central Asians.
- CHUCHMEK*: Literal translation unknown; used like *Churka* as racial epithet aimed at Central Asians.
- CHURKA*: Literally, a wood chip; a pejorative term meant to imply that the object is worthless, intellectually slow, or simply dumb. Refers mainly, if not exclusively, to Central Asians and other "Asiatics."
- CHUZHOI*
INOSTRANETS }
INOZEMETS } : Literally, "strangers"; used interchangeably to denote anyone who is not Russian, but usually reserved for non-Slavs. These terms clearly carry connotations of distrust, if not perceived disloyalty.
- EVREICHIK*: Literally, "little Jew"; has a pejorative connotation.
- KHOKHOL*: Literally, "tuft of hair forming a top-knot"; used by Russians pejoratively to denote stupidity and stubbornness in Ukrainians. When used between Ukrainians, no pejorative meaning is intended.
- KOSOGLAZYI*: Literally, "slant-eyes." Used to refer to Soviet "Asians" in the same way it is used elsewhere.
- MAKARONIK*: Literally, "macaroni-men"; used by Russians to denote military career-seeking Ukrainians, who, in the course of many years' service, strive to acquire military rank stripes, commonly referred to as "macaroni."
- NATSMEN*: Contraction of *national'nye men'shestva* (national minorities); this term carries an historic loading of the days of the Bolshevik revolution when non-Russians, and particularly those who sought greater autonomy under or independence from the Russian rule, were thought of more or less as colonials who had to be brought back into line. The term still carries the connotation of "colonial."

NERUSSKIE: Literally, "non-Russian"; used pejoratively to denote someone of inferior culture and race.

ZHELTOE GAVNO: Literally, "yellow shit." Aimed at Soviet Asians.

ZHID: Like "yid"; connoting "dirty Jew."

